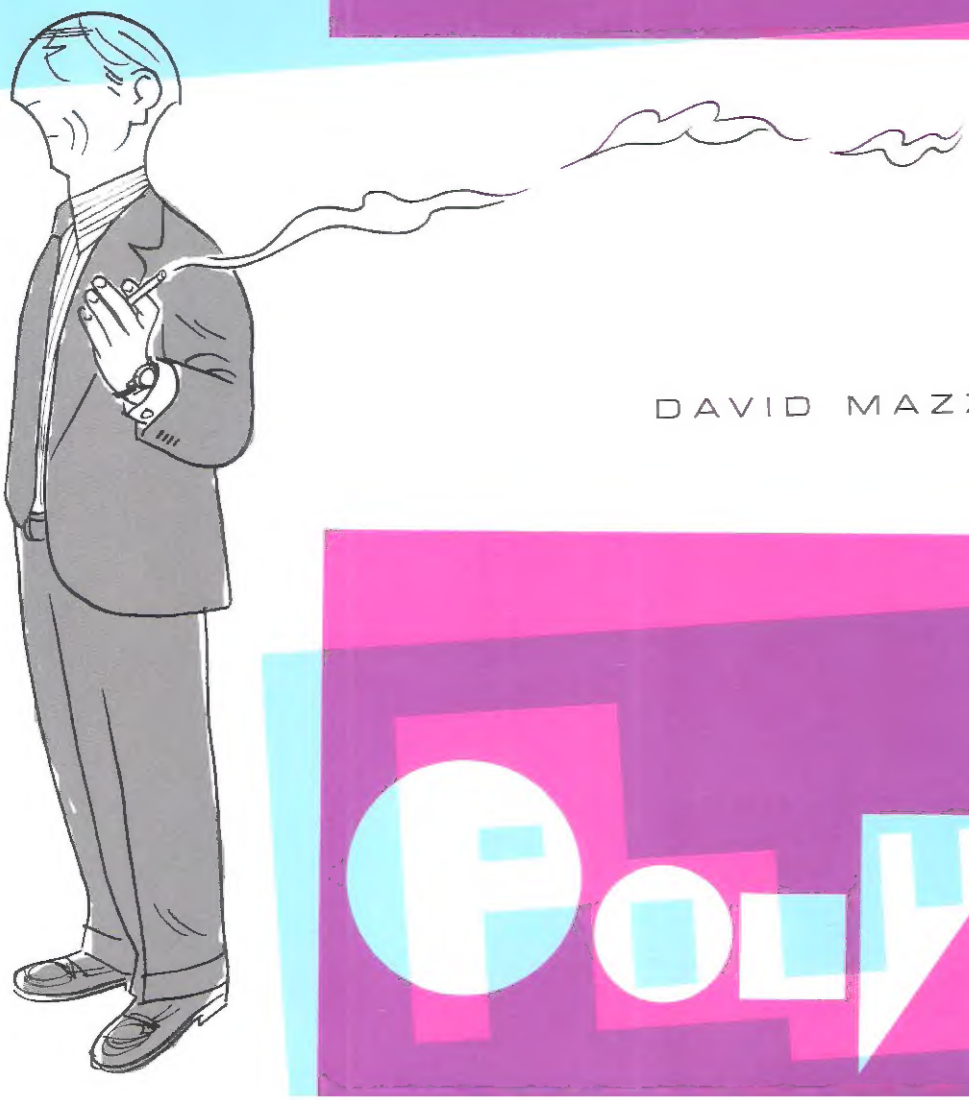
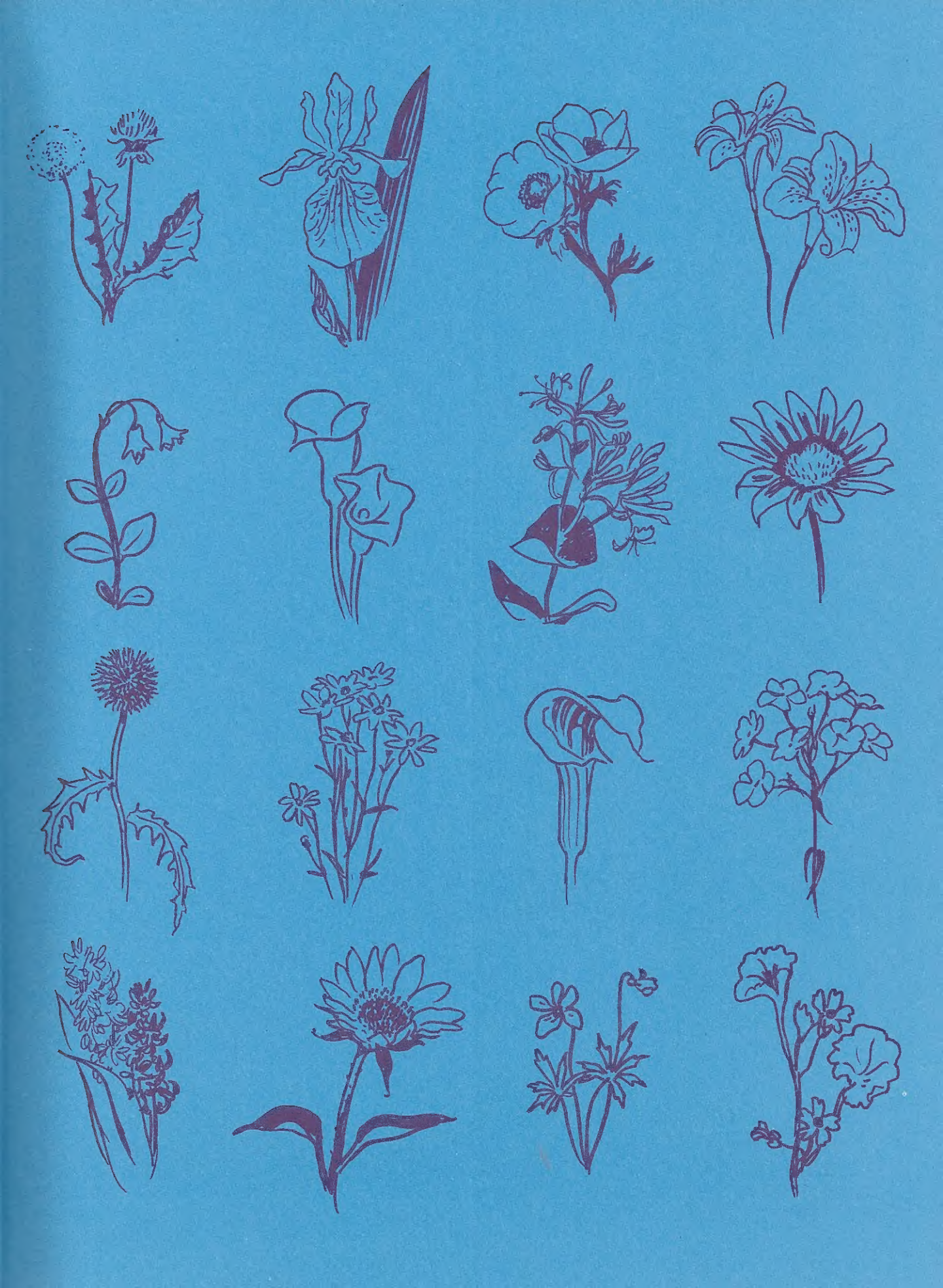
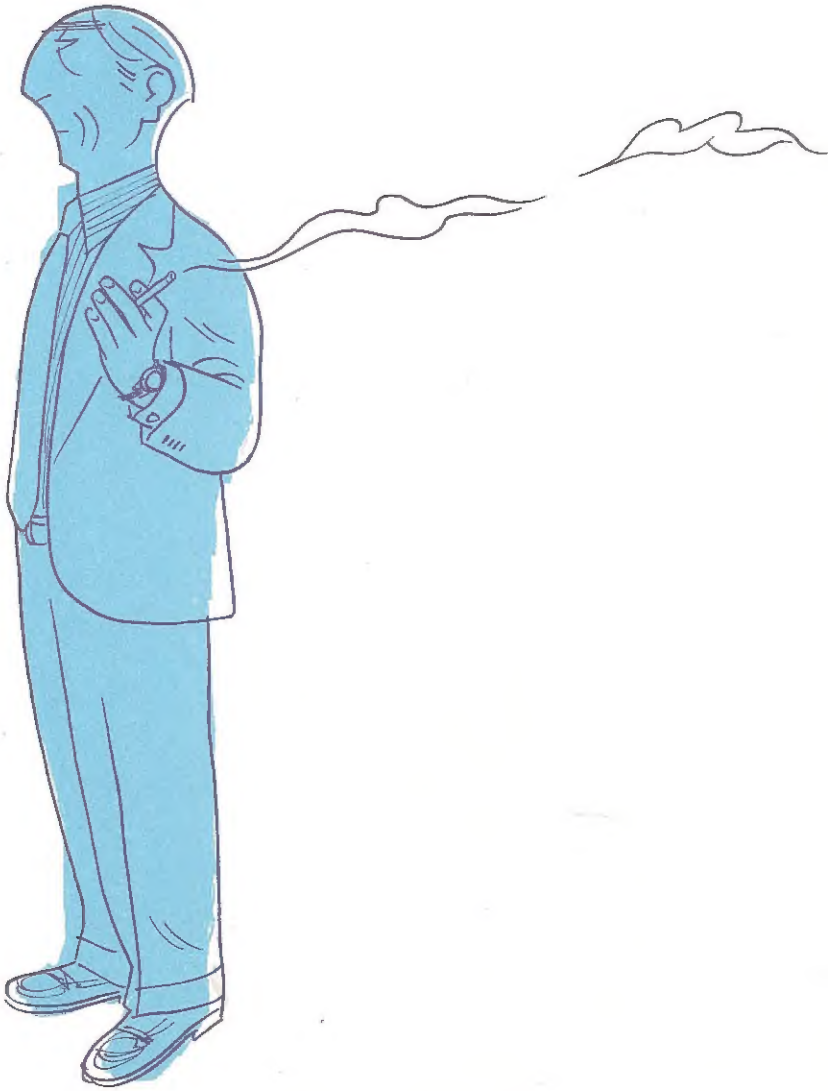
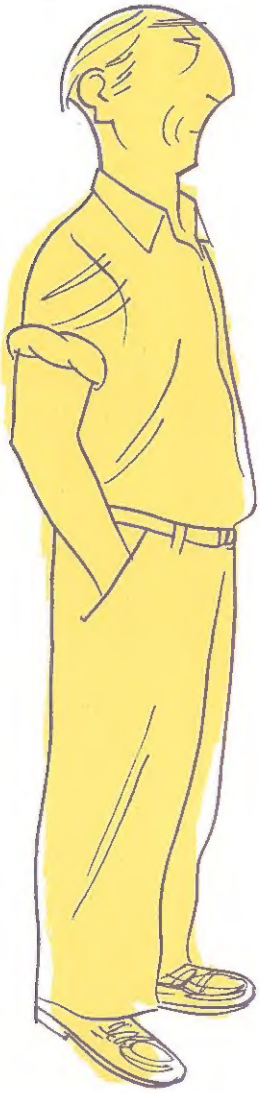
Asterios Polyp



DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI



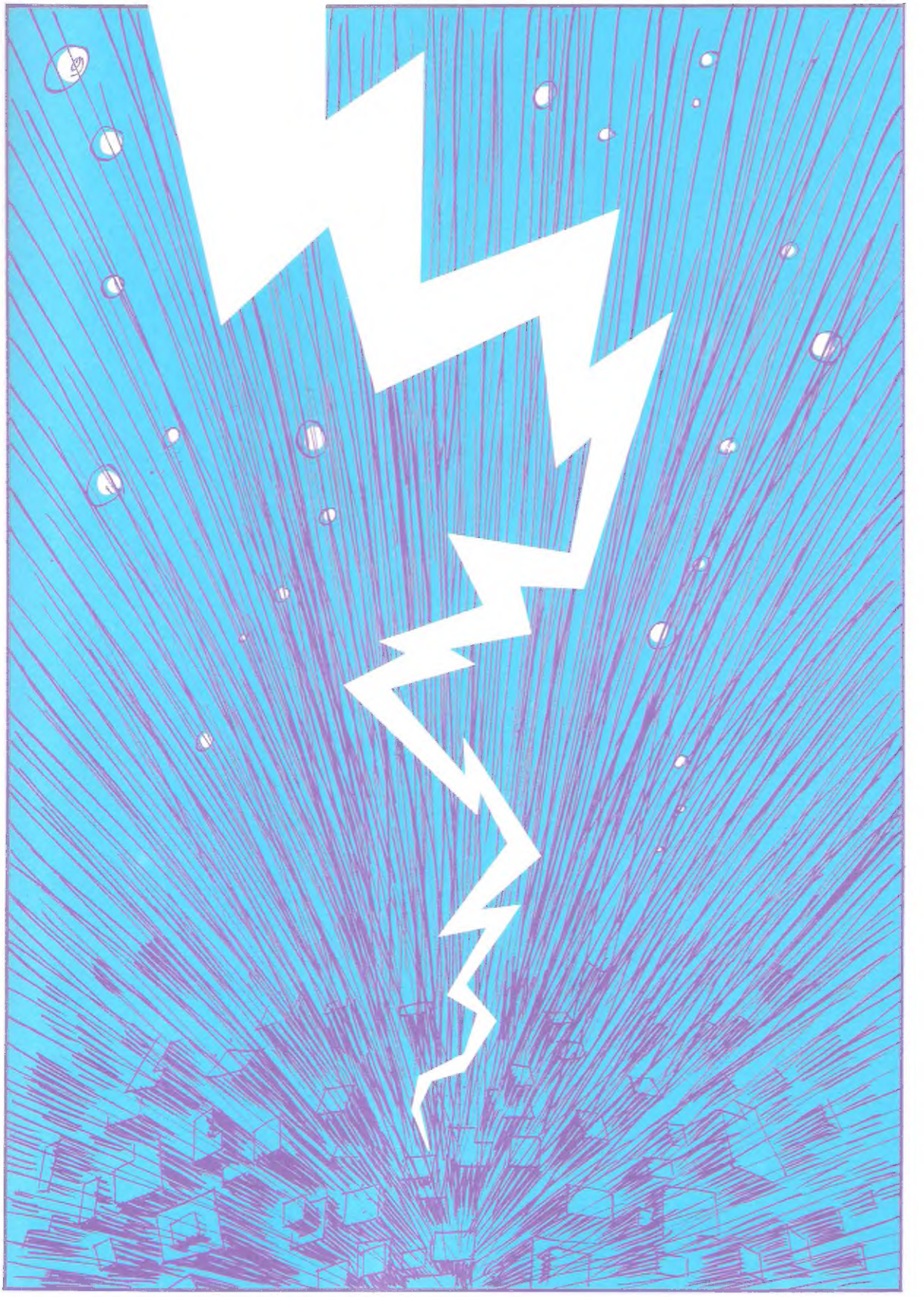


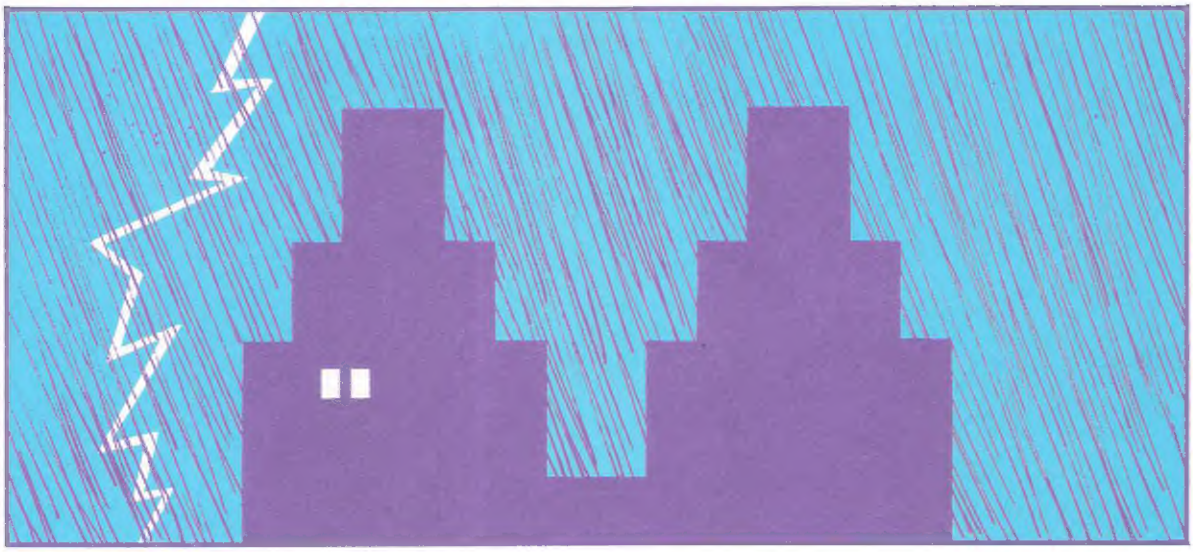


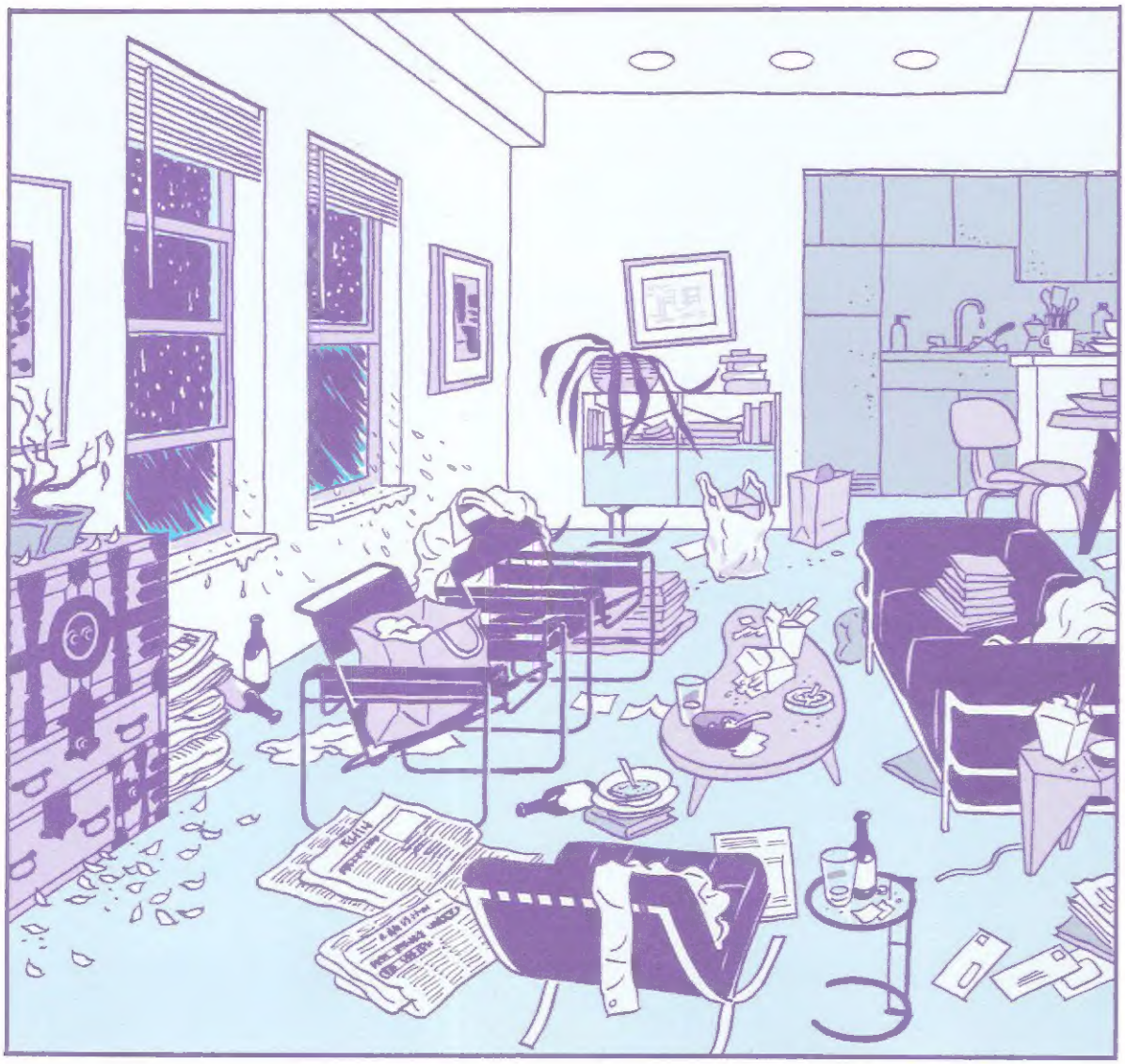
Asterios Polyp

DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI

PANTHEON BOOKS
NEW YORK







OVERDRAFT NOTICE
PAST DUE
FINAL NOTICE

mmm... oohh... that's good...
Thirtee

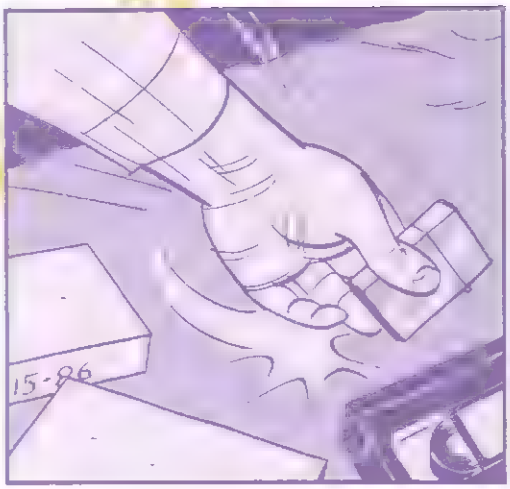
CLIK
CLIK
WAIT – HOW ABOUT THIS?
CLIK
CLIK

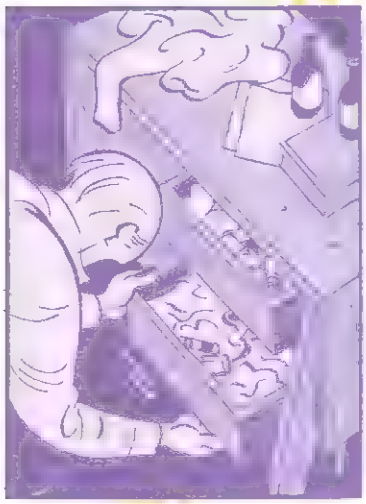
KKLAP

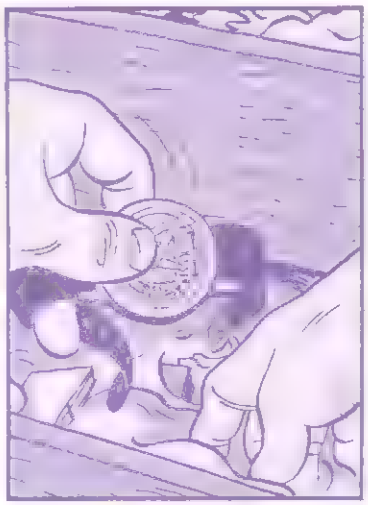
eat

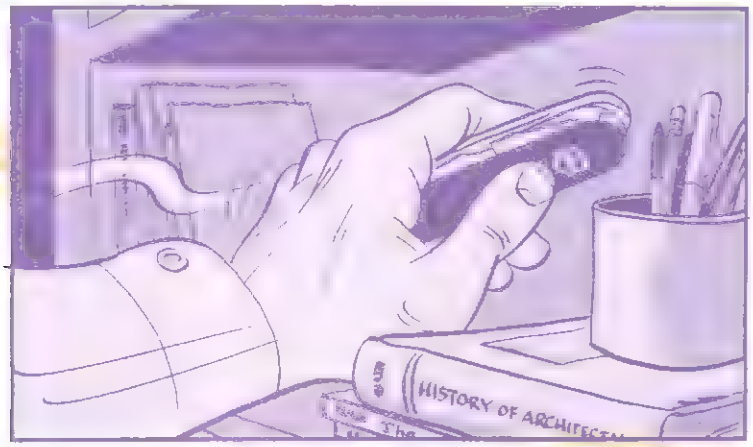
eat eat

eat eat eat


15-86






HISTORY OF ARCHITECTU

WEEEOOOEEEEEEOOOOEEE

THIS IS ASTERIOS POLYP.

IF IT WERE POSSIBLE FOR ME TO NARRATE THIS STORY, I'D BEGIN HERE.

RIGHT NOW, HE'S WATCHING HIS HOME BURN UP.

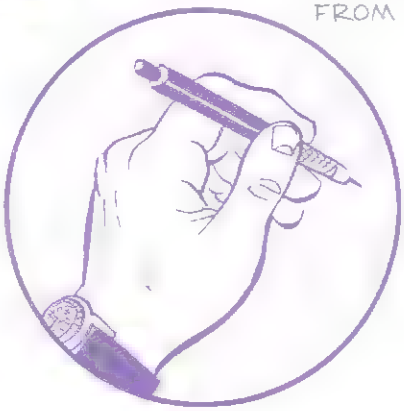
TODAY—COINCIDENTALLY—ALSO HAPPENS TO BE HIS FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY.

ASTERIOS LIVED IN THIS MANHATTAN APARTMENT FOR ALMOST TWO DECADES, BUT UNTIL SEVEN YEARS AGO HE SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME UPSTATE, TEACHING AT A UNIVERSITY IN ITHACA.

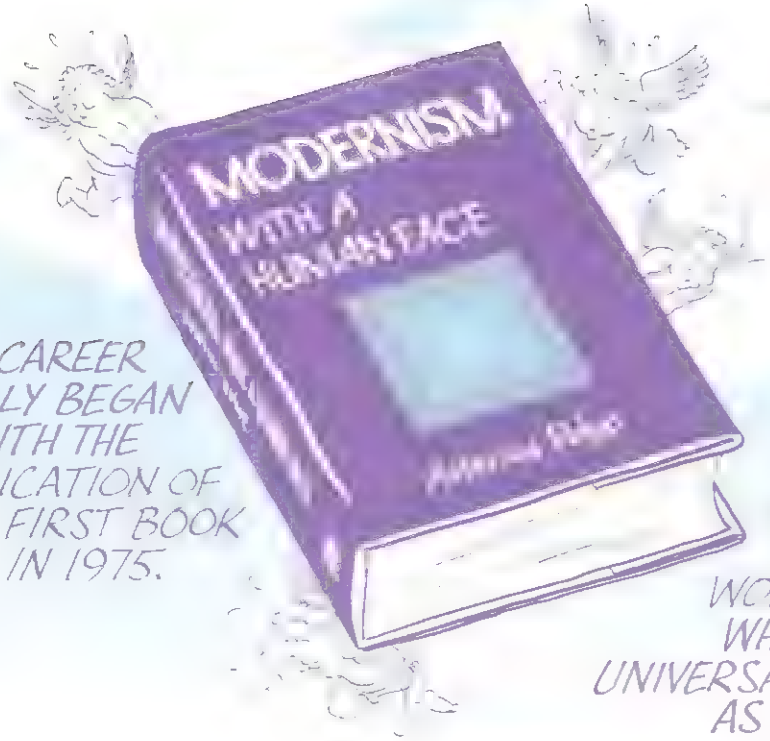
HE WAS A TENURED PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE—A POSITION BUTTRESSED BY HIS RENOWN AS A "PAPER ARCHITECT."

THAT IS TO SAY, HE WAS AN ESTEEMED ARCHITECT WHOSE REPUTATION RESTED ON HIS DESIGNS, RATHER THAN ON THE BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED FROM THEM.

IN FACT, NONE OF HIS DESIGNS HAD EVER BEEN BUILT.



NONETHELESS, HE HAD WON NUMEROUS COMPETITIONS AND AWARDS, ENOUGH TO HAVE EARNED HIM A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL CAREER.
HE TAUGHT BECAUSE HE ENJOYED THE INTELLECTUAL ENVIRONMENT.
IT WAS AT THE UNIVERSITY THAT HE MET HIS WIFE.



HIS CAREER REALLY BEGAN WITH THE PUBLICATION OF HIS FIRST BOOK IN 1975.

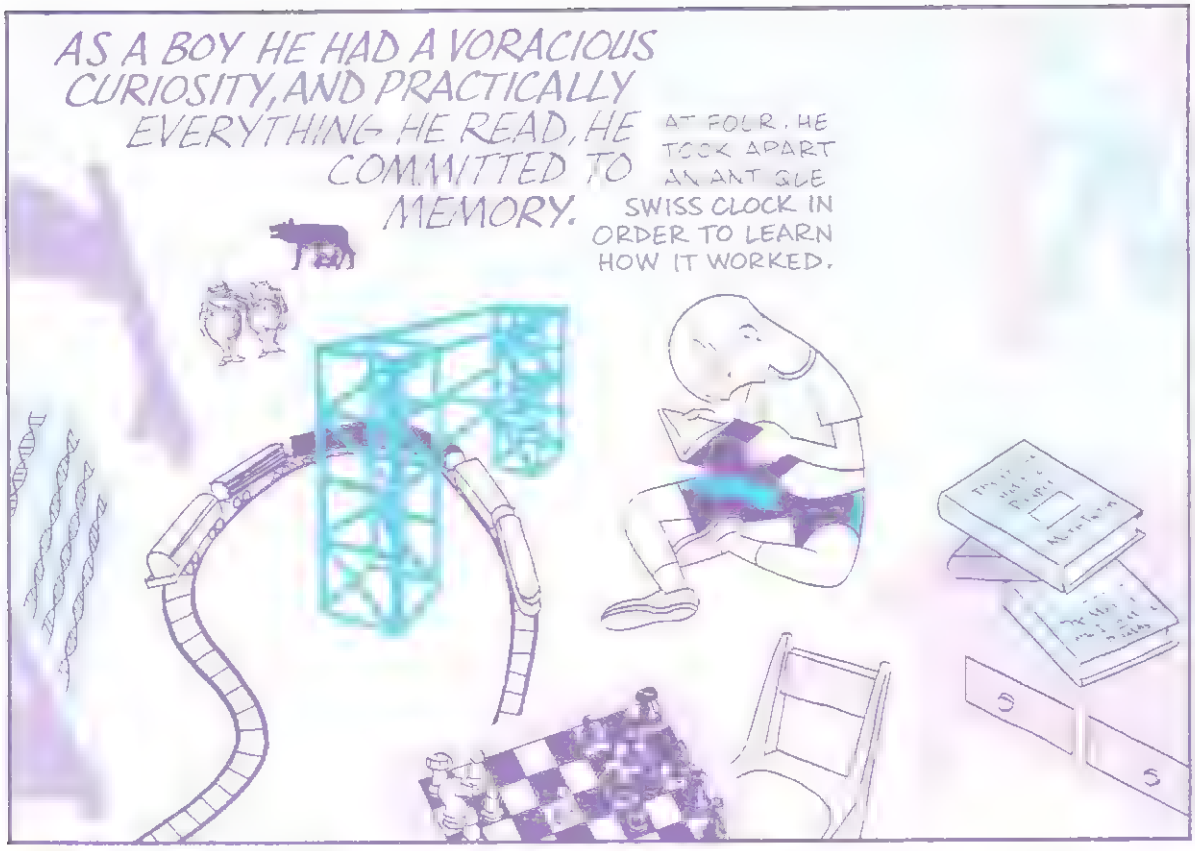
IT WAS BASED ON HIS GRADUATE WORK AT OXFORD, WHERE HE WAS UNIVERSALLY REGARDED AS A BRILLIANT STUDENT.

IT HAD BEEN THE SAME AT HARVARD,

AND IN HIGH SCHOOL BEFORE THAT.

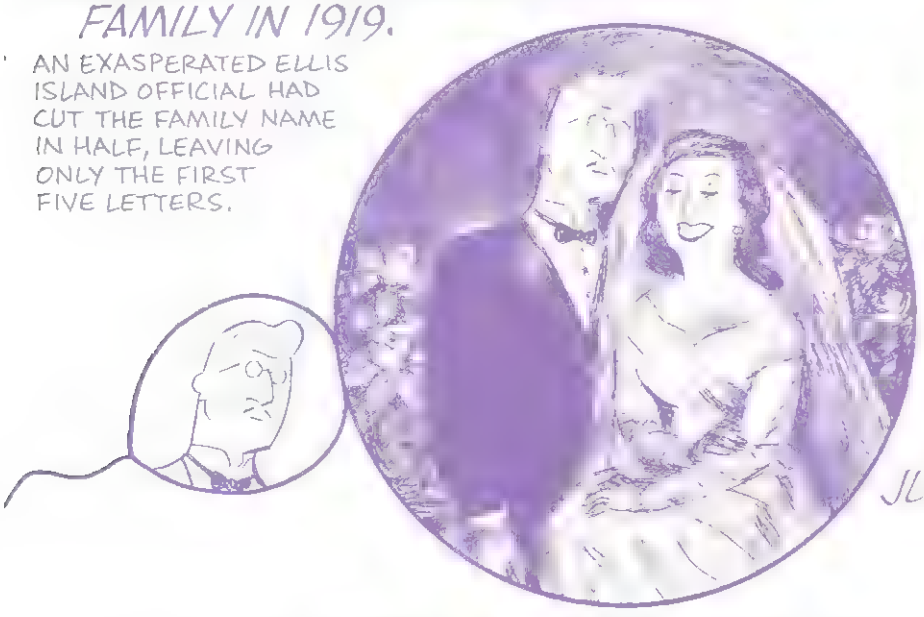
AS A BOY HE HAD A VORACIOUS CURIOSITY, AND PRACTICALLY EVERYTHING HE READ, HE COMMITTED TO MEMORY.

AT FOUR, HE TOOK APART AN ANTIQUE SWISS CLOCK IN ORDER TO LEARN HOW IT WORKED.



HIS FATHER, DR. EUGENIOS POLYP, HAD IMMIGRATED AS A CHILD WITH HIS FAMILY IN 1919.

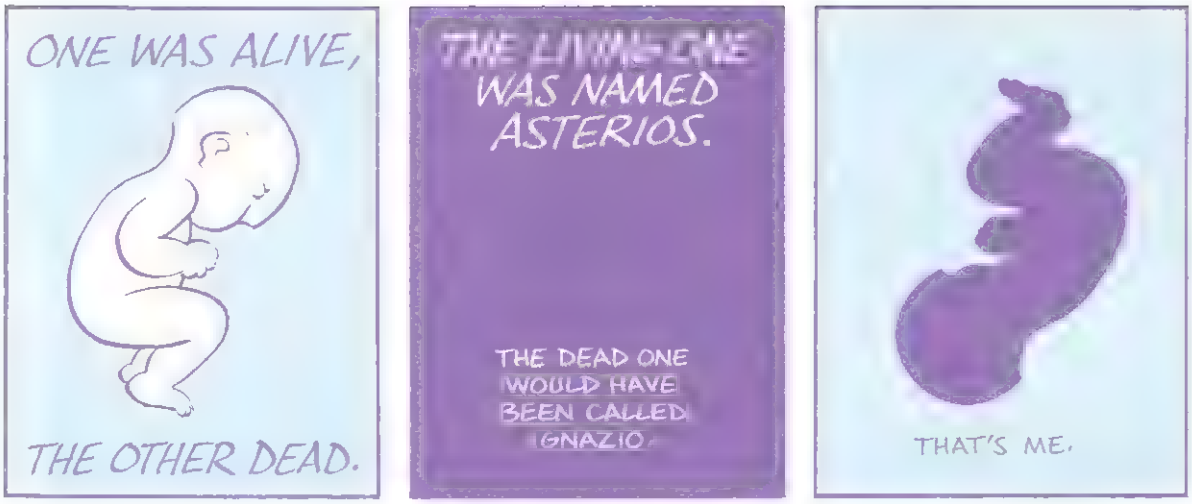
AN EXASPERATED ELLIS ISLAND OFFICIAL HAD CUT THE FAMILY NAME IN HALF, LEAVING ONLY THE FIRST FIVE LETTERS.



EUGENIOS MARRIED A HOPEFUL YOUNG GIRL NAMED AGLIA OLIO, AND ON JUNE 22, 1950,

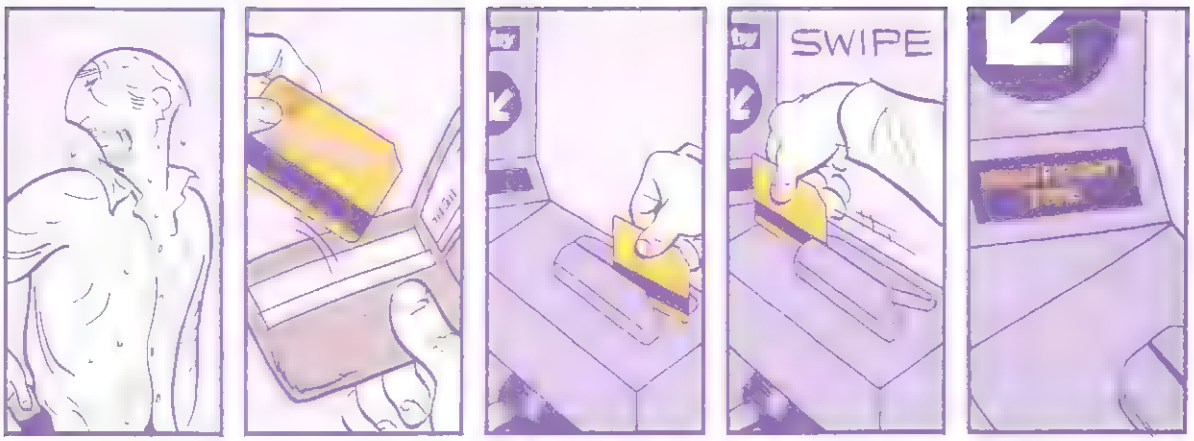
AFTER A PAINFUL, THIRTY-THREE-HOUR LABOR, AGLIA GAVE BIRTH BY CESAREAN SECTION TO IDENTICAL TWINS.

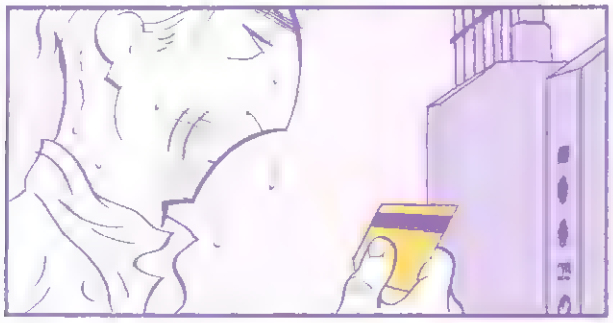
- HER HUSBAND DEFERRED TO THE EXPERT IN OBSTETRICS.

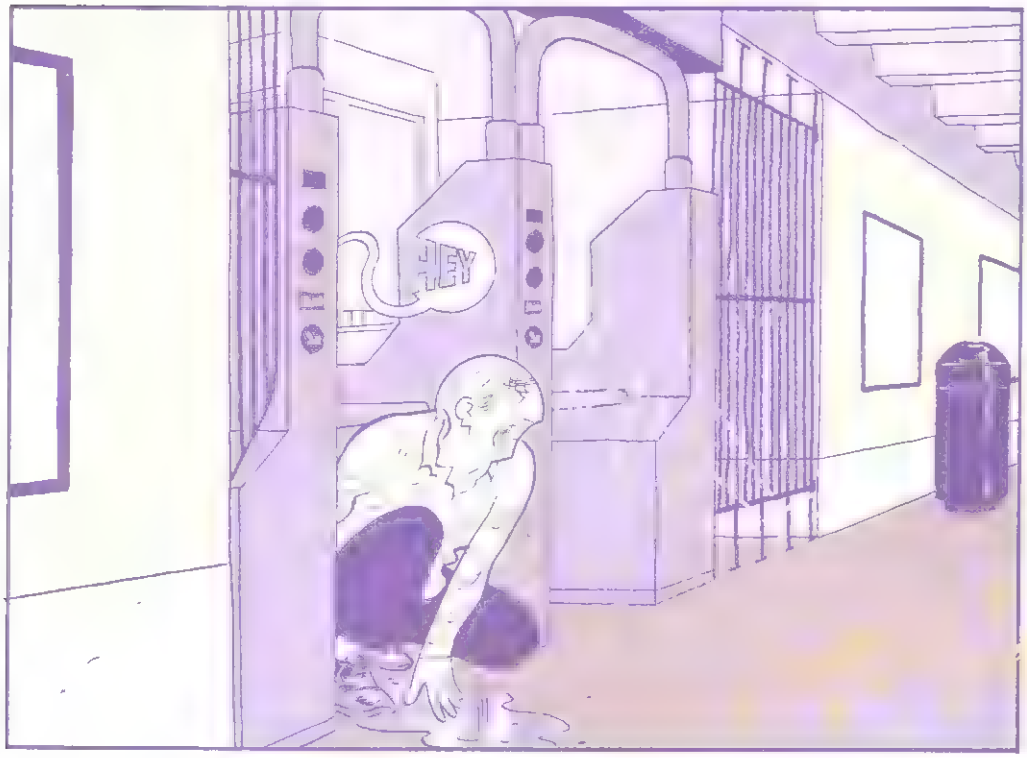


AND NOW
(FIFTY YEARS LATER),
ASTERIOS IS STANDING IN THE RAIN, WATCHING HIS HOME BURN UP, THINKING ONE THING:

THAT nobody
READ THEIR MINDS
BEFORE THEY WERE born

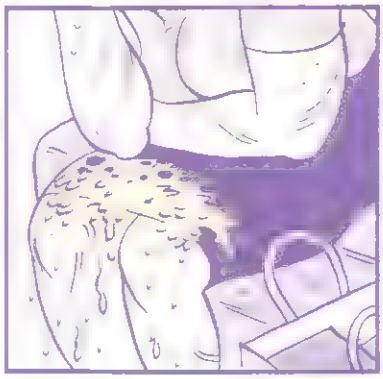

SWIPE

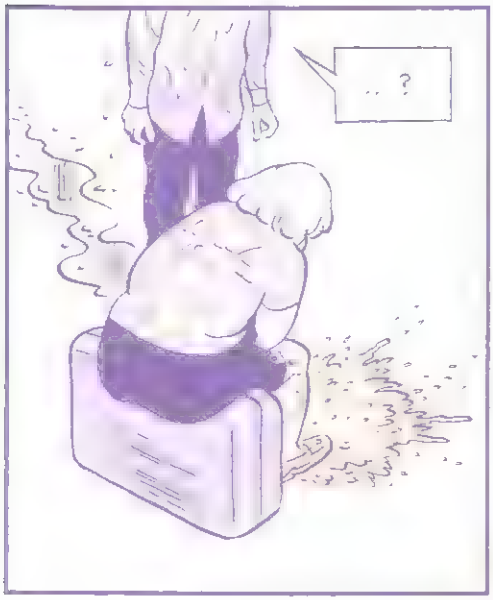



HEY

...slidin' down the aquaduct, swimmin' in the gene pool,
you wanna do the job right, get the right tool.
Splittin' me in two with a smile so Euclidean.
?
puttin' on an attitude that you can look pretty in.

POETRY IN MOTION
Spare
POETRY IN MOTION
Spare change?
POETRY IN MOTION
It feels so good to pick your nose—especially when the booger is right there.
POETRY IN MOTION
are change?
If you can't spare anything right now, please check out my Web site...
Scientists isolate crankiness gen

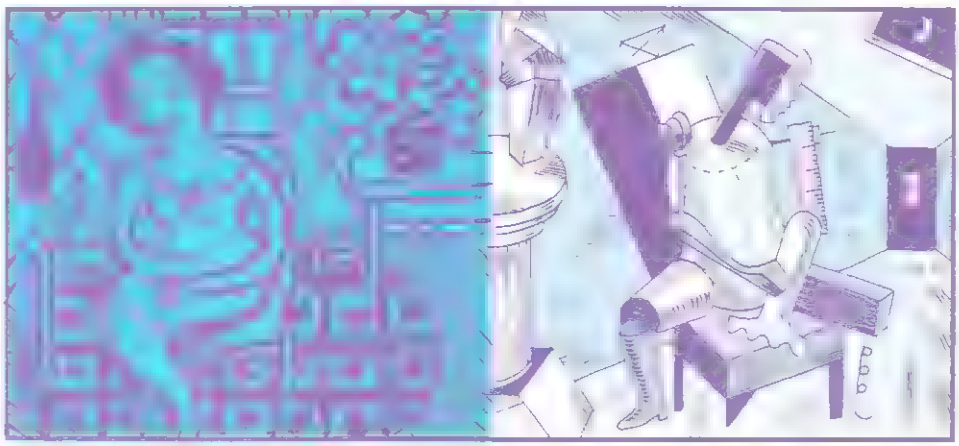




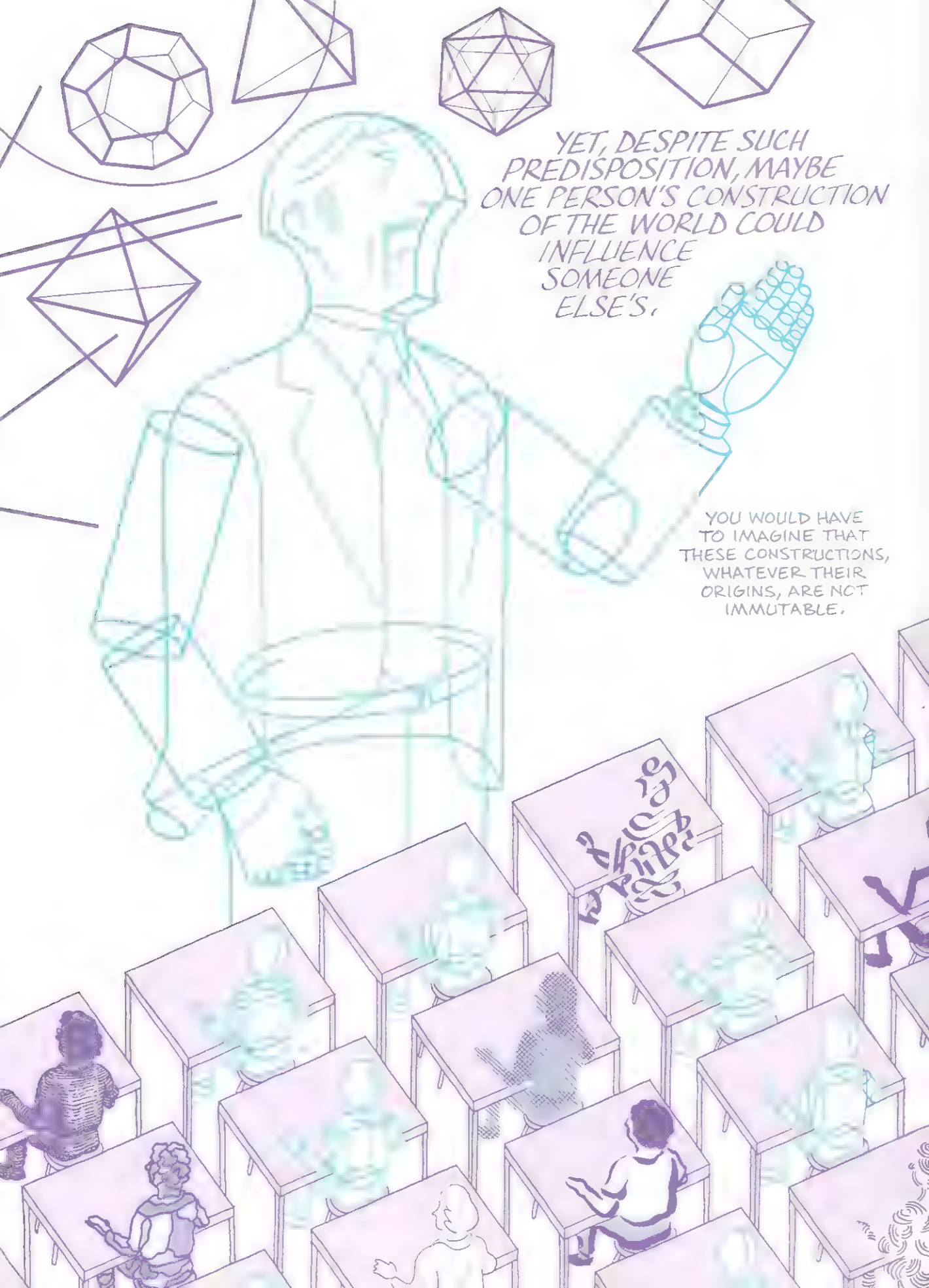
HOW FAR WOULD THIS TAKE ME ?
$
GREYHOU

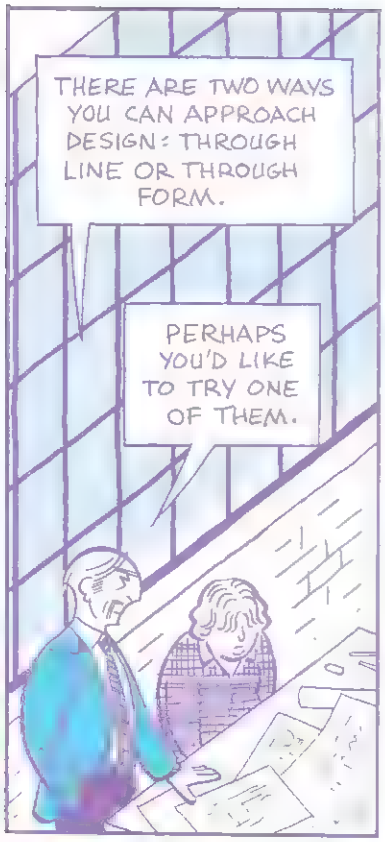
WHAT IF REALITY (AS PERCEIVED) WERE SIMPLY AN EXTENSION OF THE SELF?

THAT MIGHT EXPLAIN WHY SOME PEOPLE SEEM TO GET ALONG SO EFFORTLESSLY,


WHILE OTHERS DON'T.

Hello
Aloha
Shalom.
ALTHOUGH PEOPLE DO KEEP TRYING.


YET, DESPITE SUCH PREDISPOSITION, MAYBE ONE PERSON'S CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORLD COULD INFLUENCE SOMEONE ELSE'S.
YOU WOULD HAVE TO IMAGINE THAT THESE CONSTRUCTIONS, WHATEVER THEIR ORIGINS, ARE NOT IMMUTABLE.


THERE ARE TWO WAYS YOU CAN APPROACH DESIGN: THROUGH LINE OR THROUGH FORM.
PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO TRY ONE OF THEM.

I'm thinking about adding fenestration to this planar surface...?
HOW ABOUT JUST PUTTING A COUPLE OF WINDOWS IN THAT WALL?

YES, I DID SAY ANYTHING THAT'S NOT FUNCTIONAL BECOMES DECORATIVE...
...BUT I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT PAISLEY.

YOU CALL THIS AN ENTRANCE? I'D NEED A SPECULUM TO GET INSIDE!

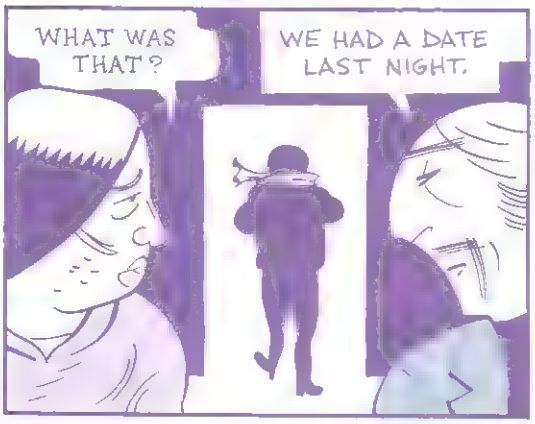
THERE ARE JUST TWO THINGS YOU NEED TO FIX HERE: THE INTERIOR AND THE EXTERIOR.
CLIK

...I can explain the meaning behind this idea...
PLEASE! ANYTHING BUT THAT!

SO HOW WAS YOUR FIRST SEMESTER?
Bushmiller

WELL, I HAVE TWO KINDS OF STUDENTS: THOSE WHO CAN'T DRAW, AND THOSE WHO CAN'T THINK.
AND THE AMOUNT OF CONFIDENCE THEY HAVE SEEMS TO BE INVERSELY PROPORTIONAL TO THEIR TALENT.

'STERIO.
LOTTA.


WHAT WAS THAT?
WE HAD A DATE LAST NIGHT.

WITH LOTTA LATTE? I THOUGHT SHE WAS A LESBIAN.
SHE USED TO BE. SHE'S A HAS-BIAN.

YOU MADE GREAT PROGRESS THROUGHOUT THE SECOND SEMESTER, LAUREL. I HAVE TO SAY, YOU SURPRISED ME. YOU'VE EARNED YOURSELF AN **A**.

Thank you, Professor.

DID YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

Just one ...

When are you going to ask me out to dinner?

WHRRRRRRR

SING SWEET, O SIREN!

THAT

S

EXTREMELY FLATTERING, BUT

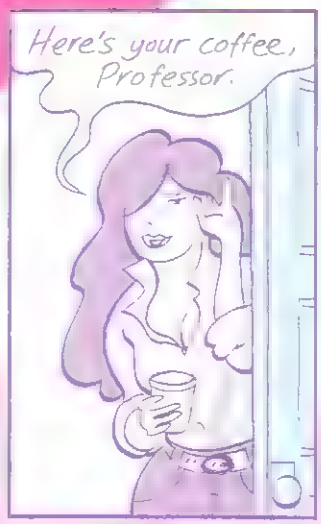
I THINK IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE

GIVEN THE NATURE

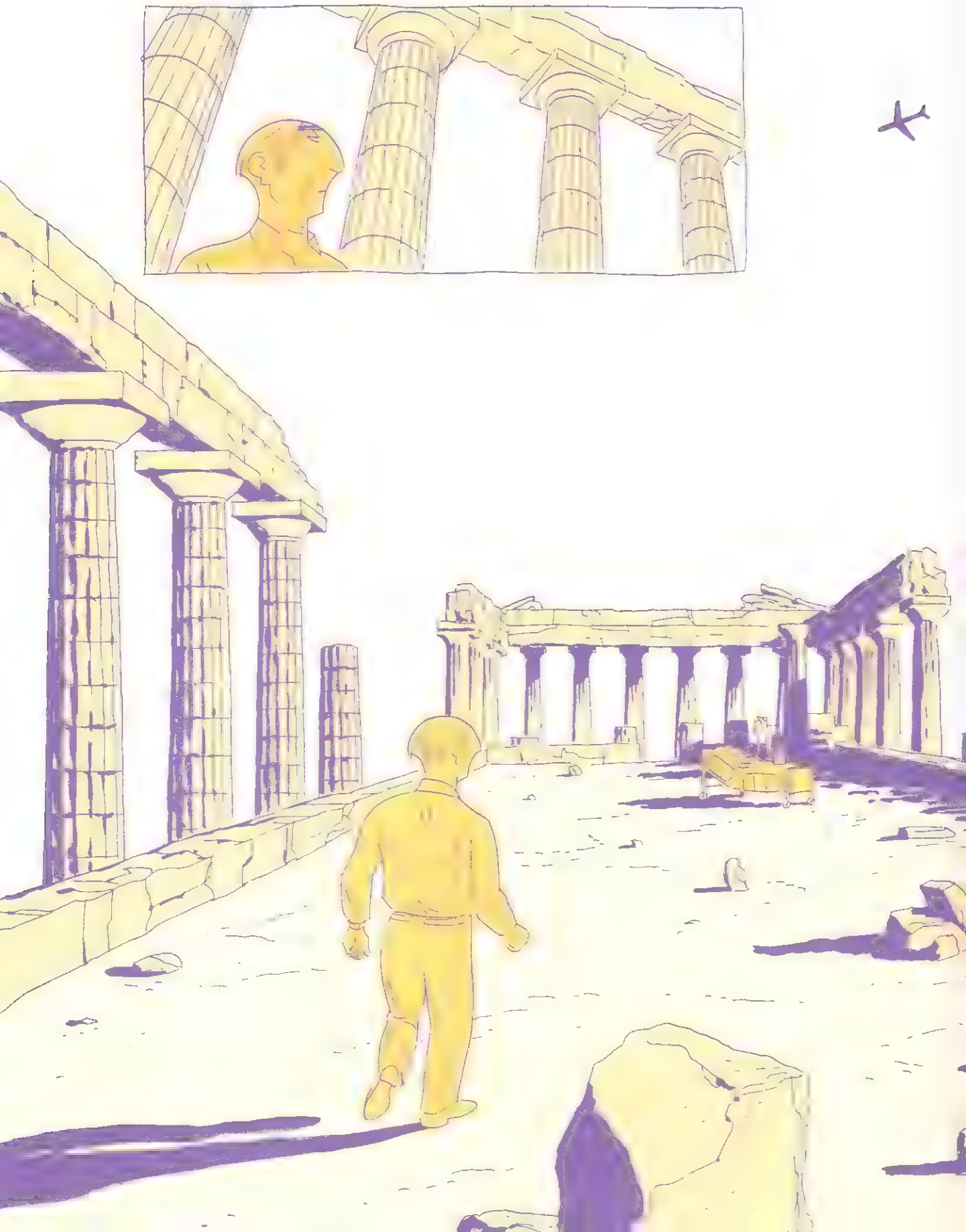
OF

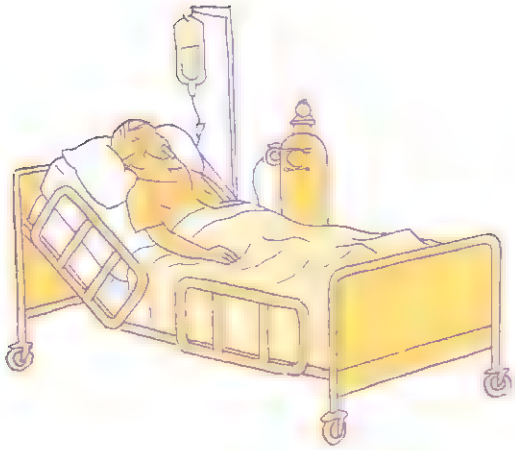
THIS WOULD SUGGEST IT'S POSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE TO FREELY ALTER HIS OWN PERCEPTION OF REALITY IN ORDER TO OVERLAP WITH THAT OF ANOTHER.

THIS CHOICE MIGHT BE SEEN AS A REFLECTION– AND NOT NECESSARILY A RESULT – OF ONE'S GENETIC ARCHITECTURE.

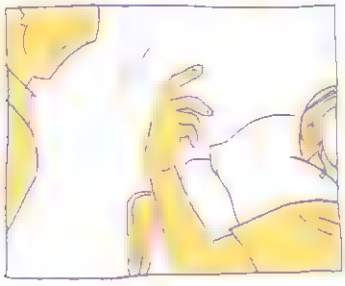


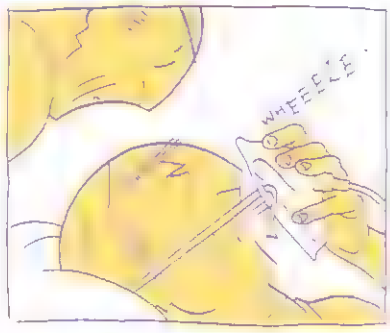
WOULDN'T THAT BE NICE?

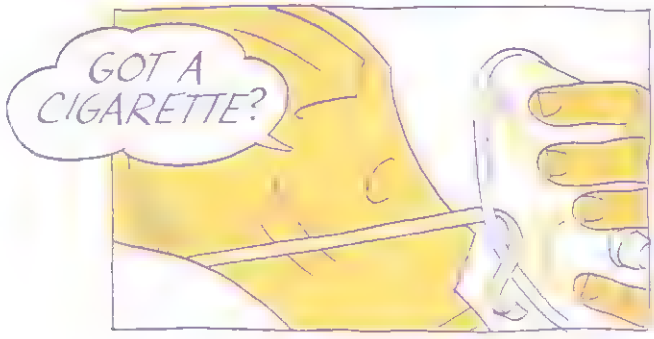




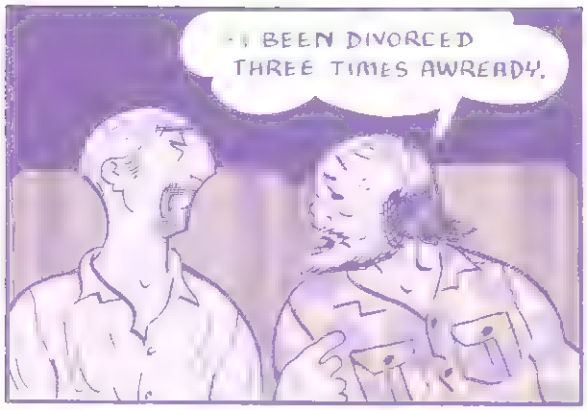
.GNAZIO?

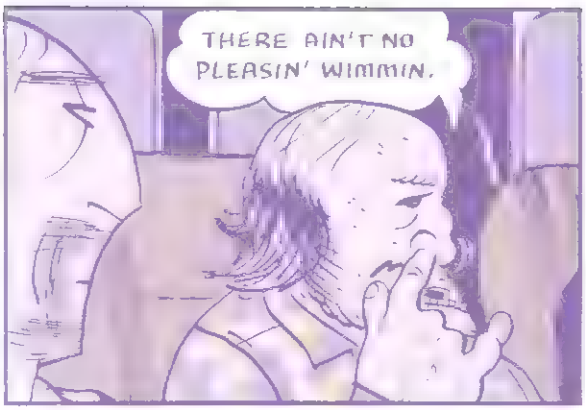



WHEEEEE.

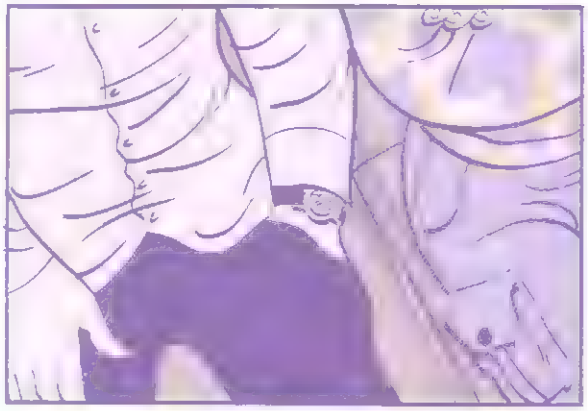

GOT A CIGARETTE?

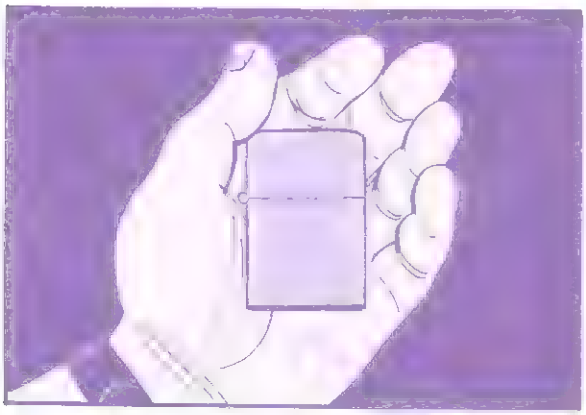
...BUDDY...?
...GOT A CIGARETTE?
MY WIFE MADE ME QUIT.
MARRIED, HUH?
UH
YES
NO
I'M DIVORCED.
TELL ME ABOUT IT –

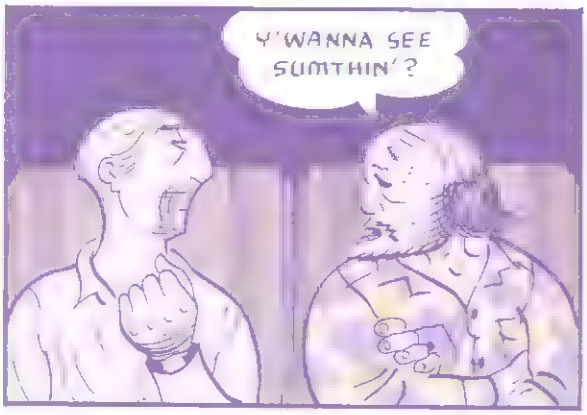

I BEEN DIVORCED THREE TIMES AWREADY.

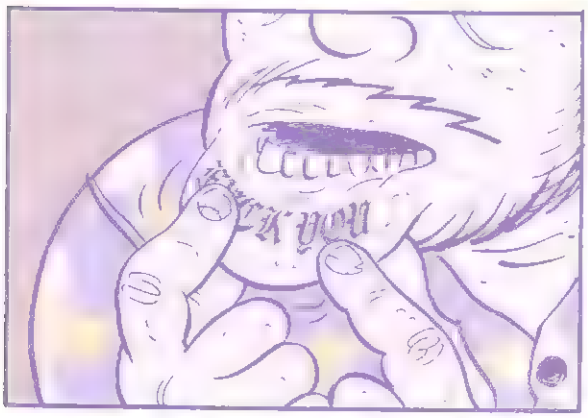

THERE AIN'T NO PLEASIN' WIMMIN.

MAN, I'M DYIN' FOR A CIGARETTE.

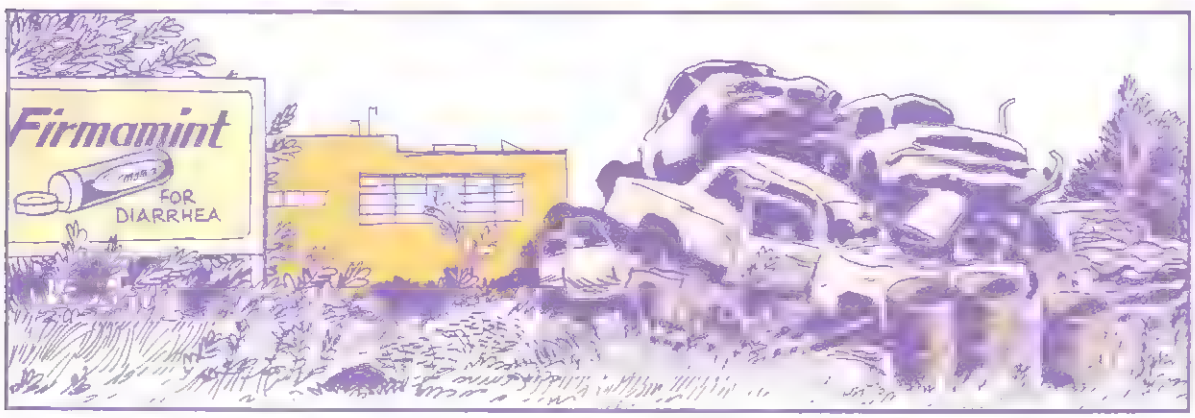


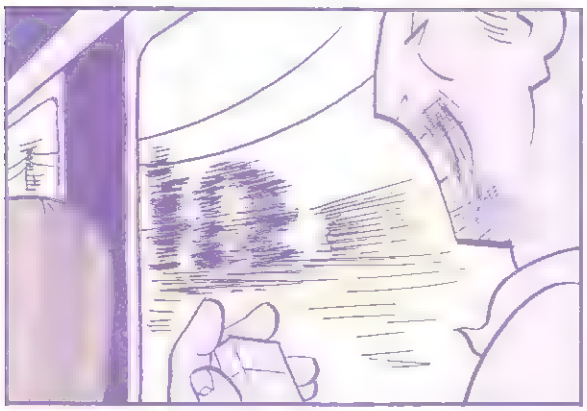


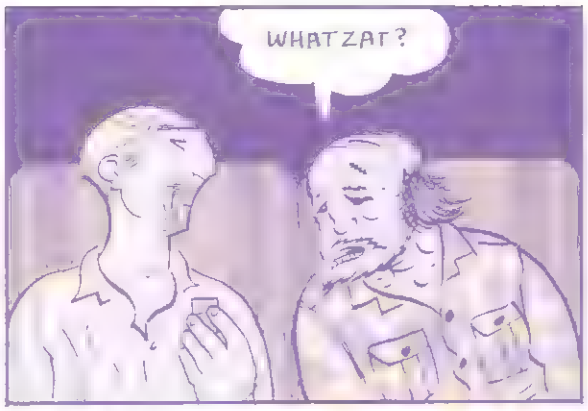

Y'WANNA SEE SUMTHIN'?

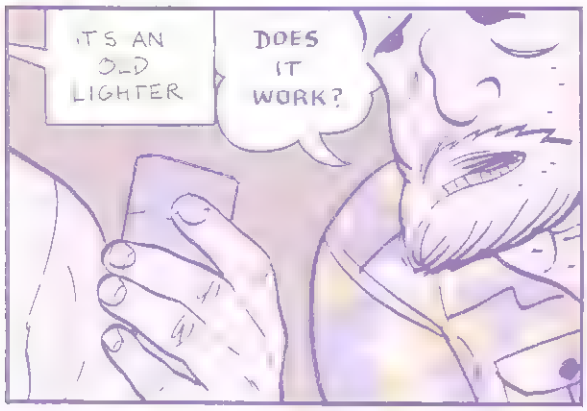


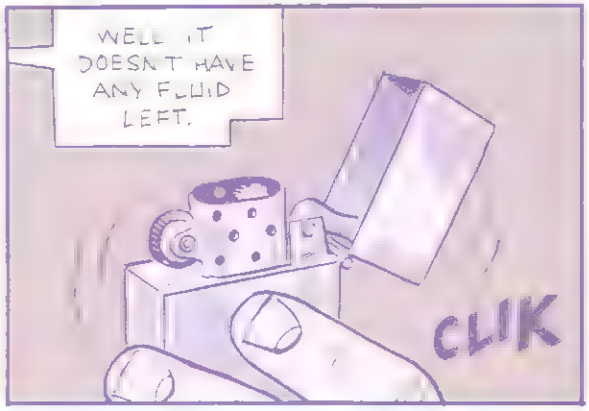
I GOT THAT IN PRISON.
DELIGHTFUL

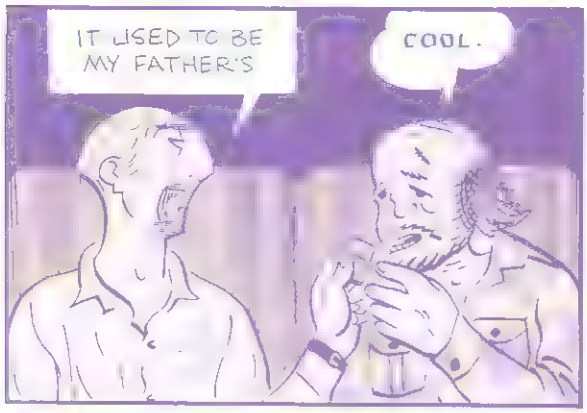

Firmamint
FOR
DIARRHEA




WHAT'ZAT?

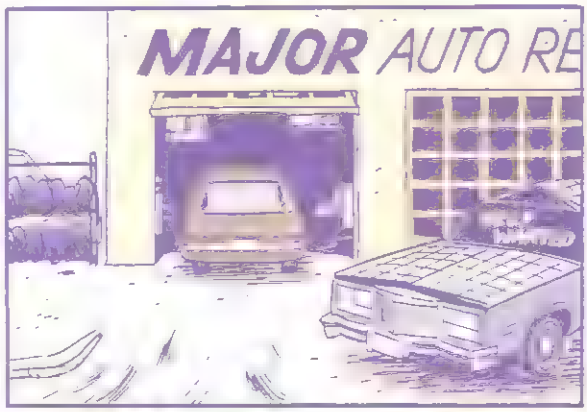

IT'S AN OLD LIGHTER
DOES IT WORK?

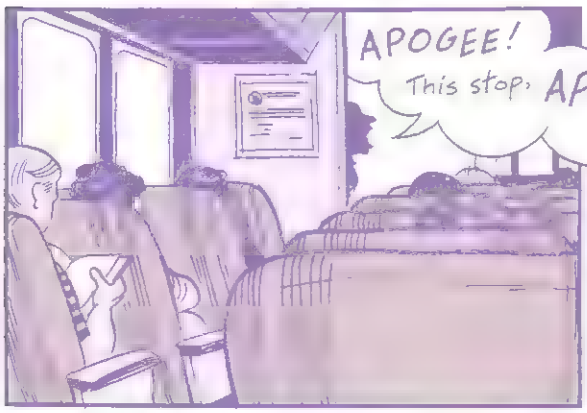

WELL IT DOESN'T HAVE ANY FLUID LEFT.
CLIK


IT USED TO BE MY FATHER'S
COOL.

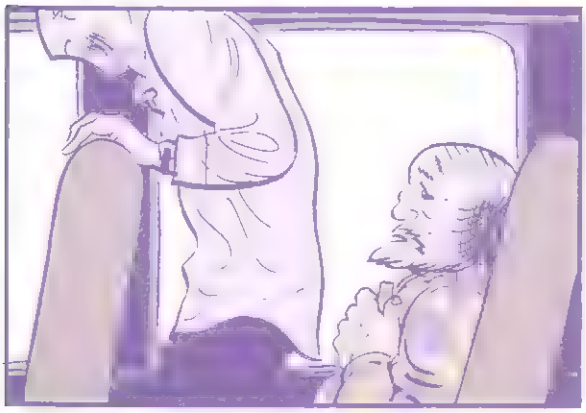
KIN I HAVE IT?

rnbeek's
BREAKFAST
LUNCH
OPEN

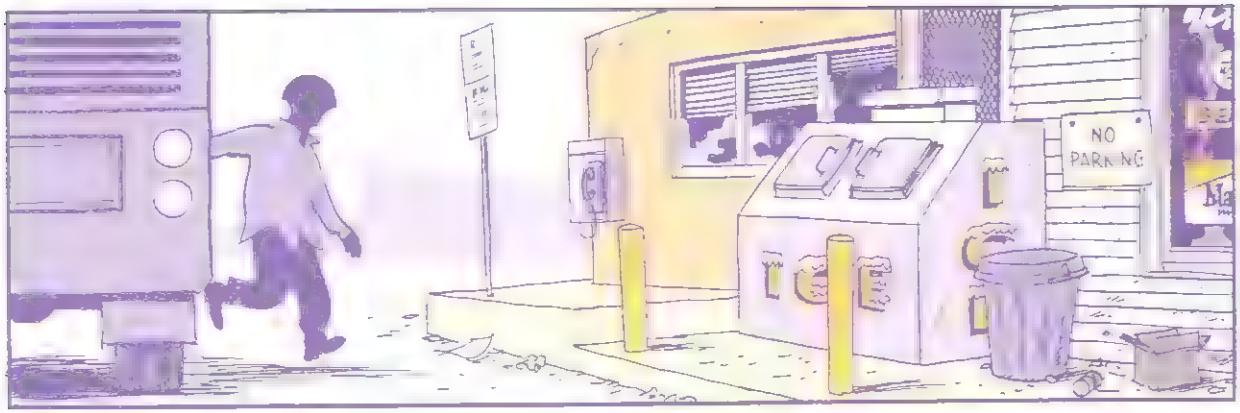

MAJOR AUTO RE


APOGEE!
This stop, APOGEE!

MY STOP.



KEEP IT
THANKS, MAN.


NO
PARKING

MAJOR AUTO REPAIR

Hello?
@★#
I'M LOOKING FOR A JOB.
You ever work on cars before?
A LITTLE.
I'M ALSO LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO LIVE.
I got a room in my house to lent. How much can you afford?
HOW MUCH ARE YOU PAYING ME?
My name's Stiff Major
ASTERIOS POLYP.
Pleased ta meet you.

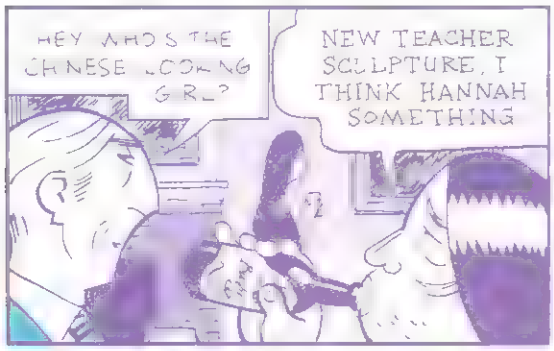
WOULD IT BE ALL RIGHT IF I STARTED IN ABOUT AN HOUR OR SO?
I JUST GOT OFF A BUS AND I NEED TO GET SOMETHING TO EAT.
No skin off my back. Try Hornbeek's, just down the road
THANKS
Hornbeek's
BREAKFAST
OPEN
GRMBLE
APOGEE FREE LIBRARY
THE CAR BOOK
BASIC AUTO MECHANICS
AUTO REPAIR

AT A FACULTY PARTY IN 1984, ASTERIOS WAS REGALING THE ASSEMBLY WITH HIS INSIGHT INTO COMMUNICATION,

HIS UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR,

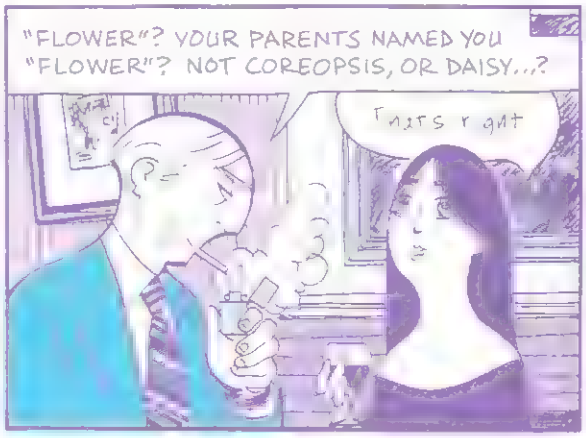
AND HIS SENSITIVITY.

HE WAS QUITE CAPABLE OF HOLDING FORTH ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS.

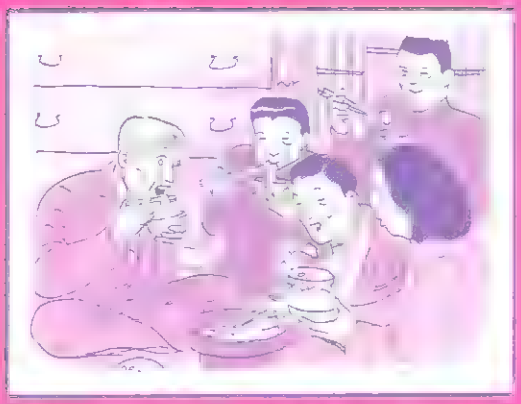


HE TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF TO GREET THE NEW ARRIVAL,

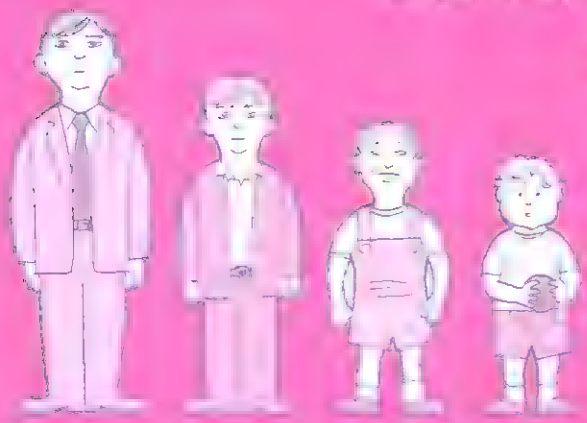
AND TO MAKE HER FEEL WELCOME.



HANA'S FATHER, LIEUTENANT ERNST SONNENSCHEIN, WAS MARRIED WHILE STATIONED OUTSIDE TOKYO IN 1945.



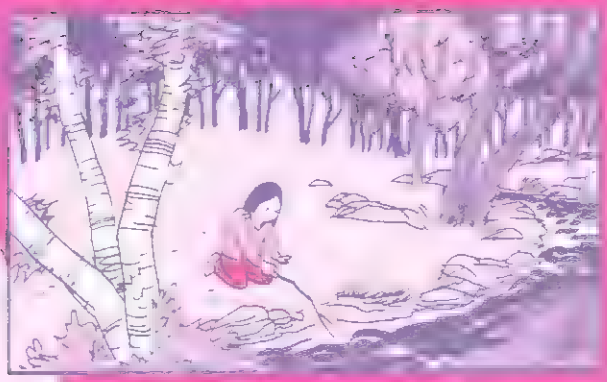
HIS WIFE, MUTSUKO, WAS THE DAUGHTER OF A PROUD WAR VETERAN WHO LATER TOOK HIS OWN LIFE FOR FAILING TO PROPERLY PROTECT HIS COUNTRY.

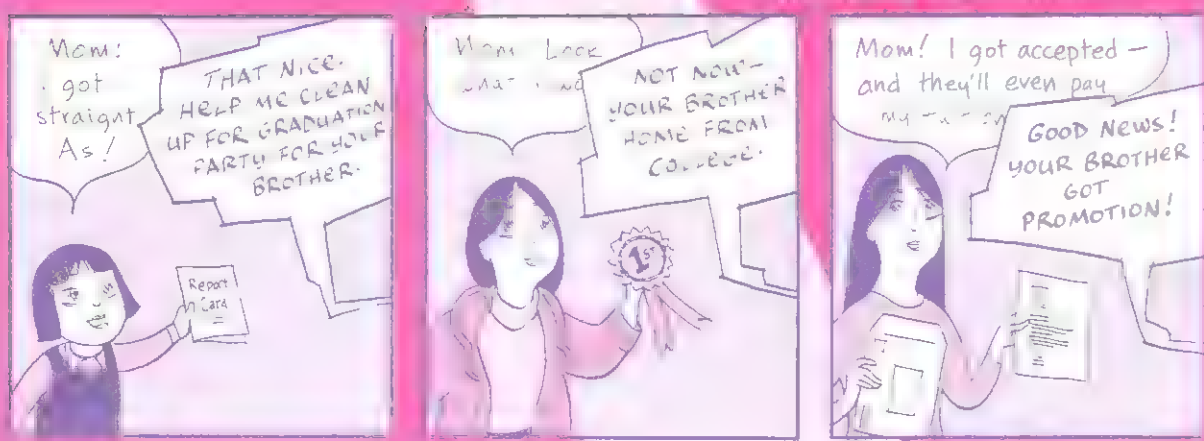


MUTSUKO SONNENSCHEIN BORE FOUR SONS IN FIVE YEARS.

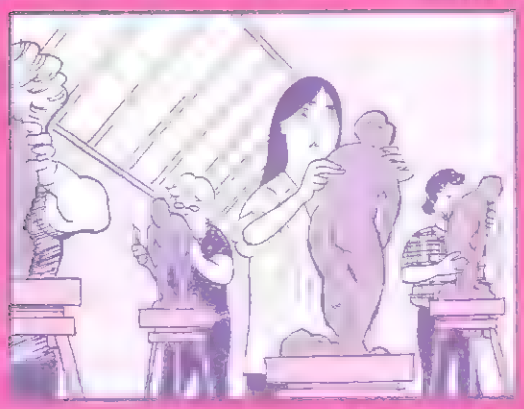
IT WAS ANOTHER SIX YEARS BEFORE SHE DELIVERED HANA.

HANA WAS A HAPPY CHILD WHO SPENT A LOT OF TIME ALONE.





HANA ATTENDED A PRESTIGIOUS COLLEGE OF ART IN RHODE ISLAND ON A [illegible] FULL [illegible] SCHOLARSHIP.



ALTHOUGH SHE WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY STUDENT, SHE ALWAYS WORRIED ABOUT BEING THE WORST IN THE CLASS.

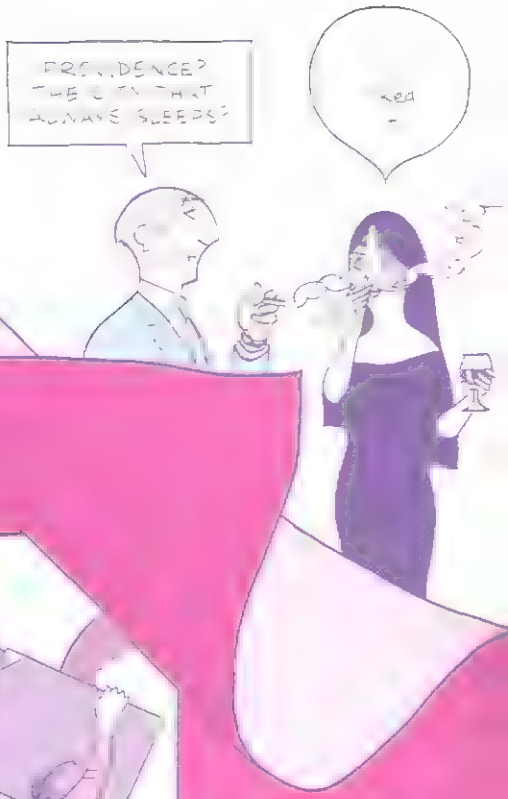
[illegible]

SHE HAD A FEW BOYFRIENDS, BUT ONLY BECAUSE THEY SOUGHT HER OUT.

[illegible]

AFTER FOUR OUTSTANDING YEARS, SHE WAS CHOSEN TO DELIVER THE VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

[illegible]



The fellowship award ceremony is in two weeks
Couldn't you just mail me the
WE'D LOVE TO INCLUDE YOU IN OUR EXHIBITION, MS. SONNEN-SCHEIN.
I'm not really happy with my work right now.
You should apply for this teaching position. You'd be

IN 1984, HANA SONNENSCHEIN ATTENDED HER FIRST FACULTY PARTY.

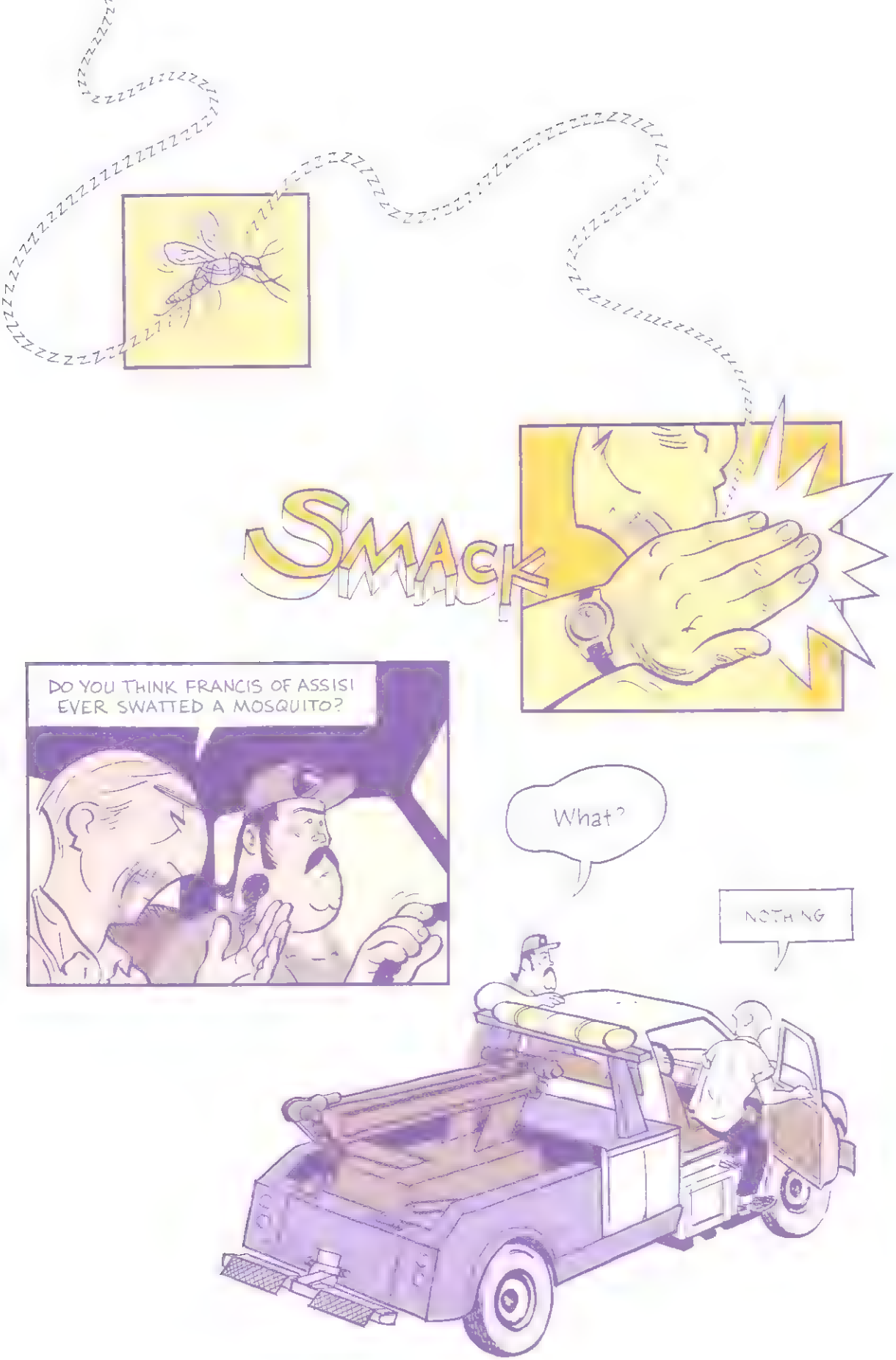
SHE DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE THERE,

BUT ONE PERSON CAUGHT HER EYE.

DON'T ASK ME TO EXPLAIN THESE THINGS.

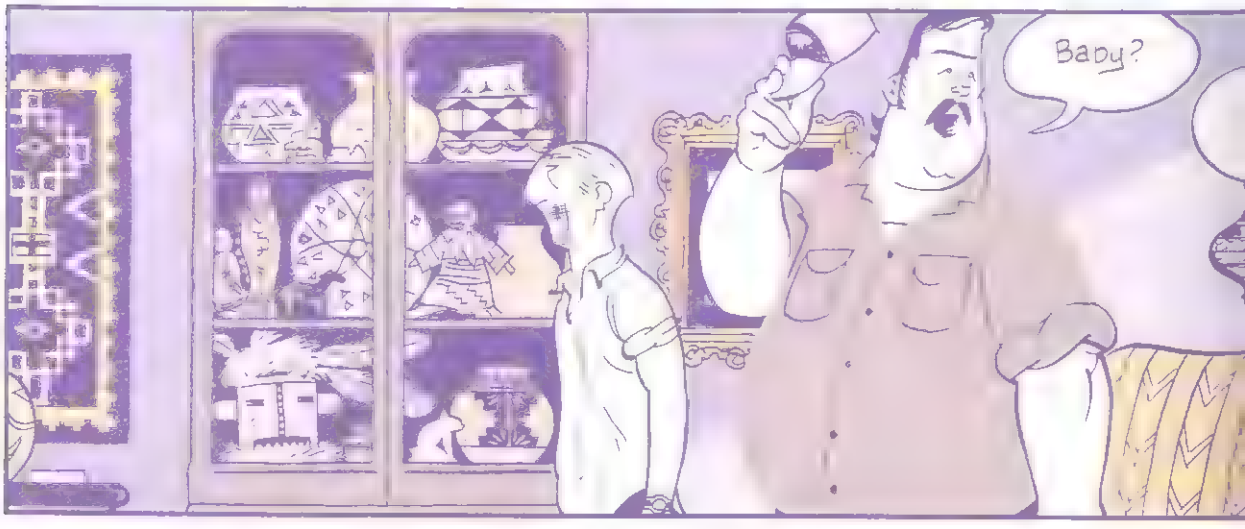
AND WHEN HE CAME OVER TO INTRODUCE HIMSELF,

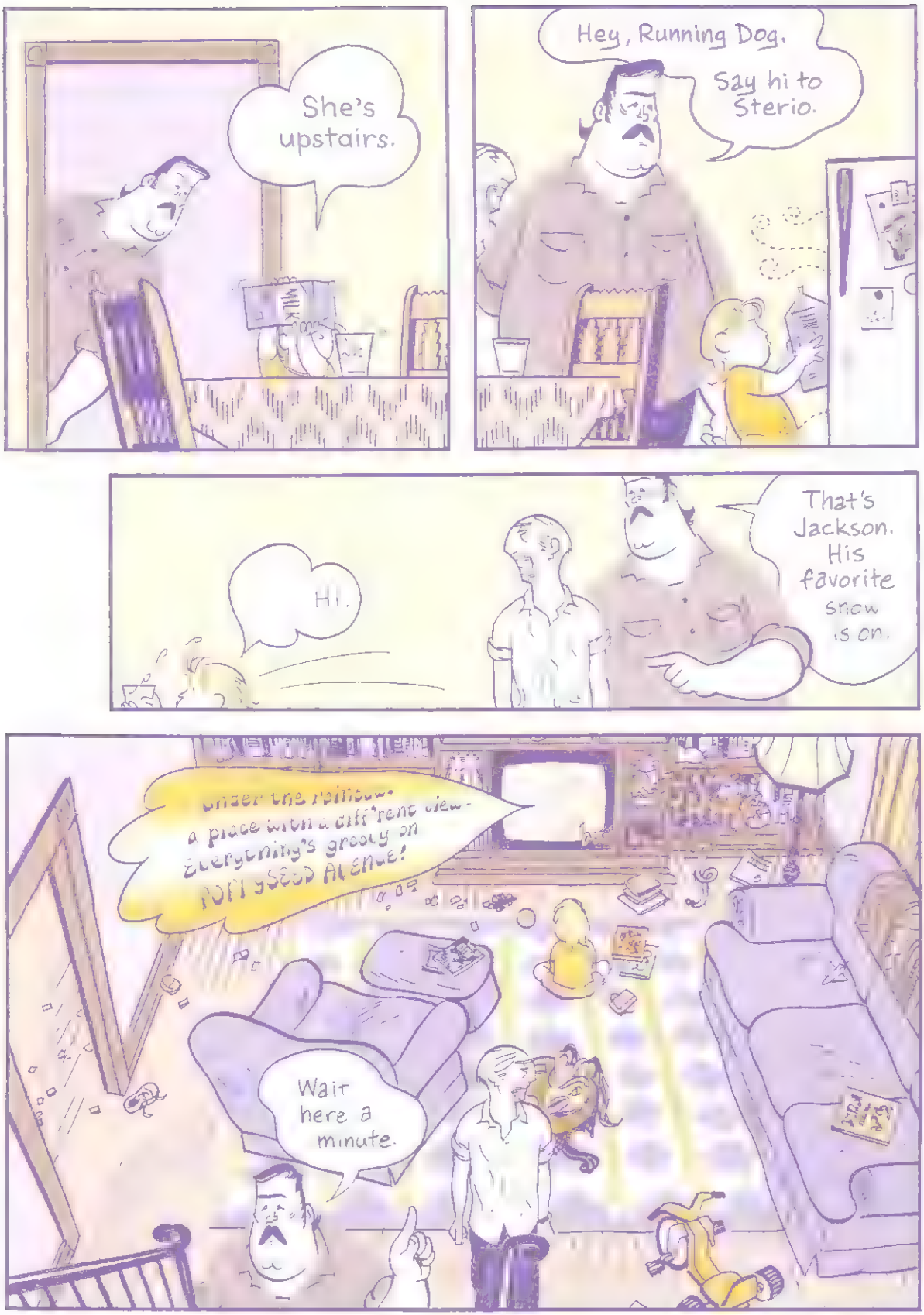
SHE FELT SHE WAS STARING STRAIGHT INTO THE SPOTLIGHT.


SMACK
DO YOU THINK FRANCIS OF ASSISI EVER SWATTED A MOSQUITO?
What?
NOTHING

We had some flooding.

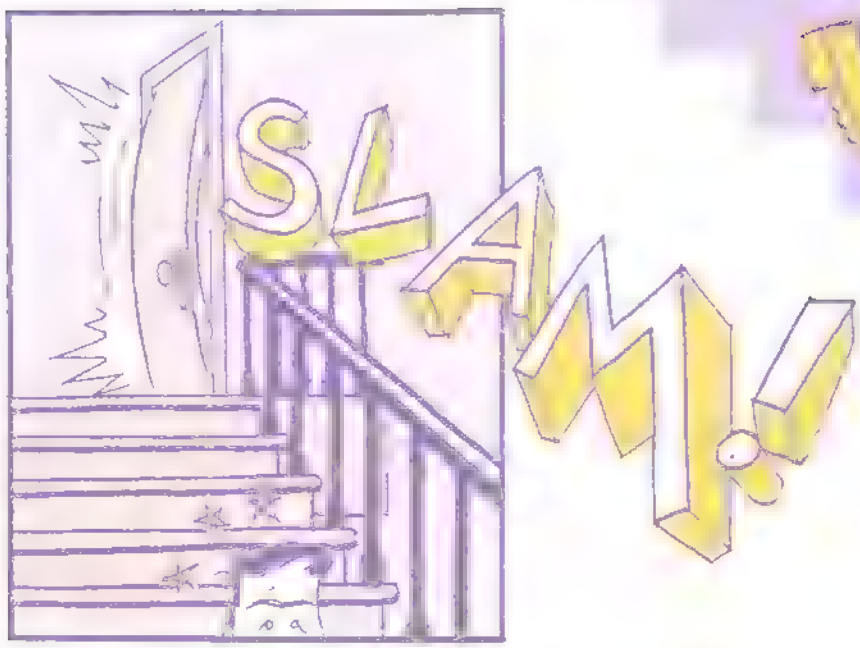
Hey, babe, I'm home


Baby?


She's upstairs.
Hey, Running Dog.
Say hi to Sterio.
Hi.
That's Jackson. His favorite snow is on.
Wait here a minute.

Hey babe
Remember we were talkin' about that extra room
We like your company, always cool hatin' you-
K-TWAN
Come down and hang out on POPPYSEED AVENUE!
bum bum bum
The B
YOU DID WHAT ?!

HOW COULD YOU GO AND RENT THAT ROOM WITHOU DISCUSSING IT WITH ME FIRST? DON'T YOU THIN



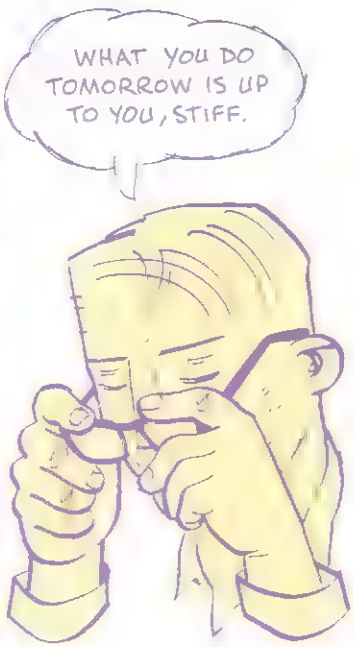
You gotta come when Mañana's on— she's heads and tails above all the other cocks.

What's car getcha?

Hey, Spotty! How's it goin'?
Are we still safe?

PLEASE CALL ME STEVEN.

Sure.
Steven.
So, should I go to work tomorrow, or what?


WHAT YOU DO TOMORROW IS UP TO YOU, STIFF.

For about ten years, Spotty's – **Steven's** – been keepin' an eye on the sky for us...
...makin' sure we're not gonna get hit by a meteorite.

ASTEROID. AN **ASTEROID.** YOU SHOULD BE GLAD I'M LOOKING.
A FEW YEARS AGO, ONE ABOUT THE SIZE OF A HOUSE WHIPPED PAST US – JUST SIXTY THOUSAND MILES FROM EARTH – AND NOBODY SAW IT TILL THE DAY BEFORE!

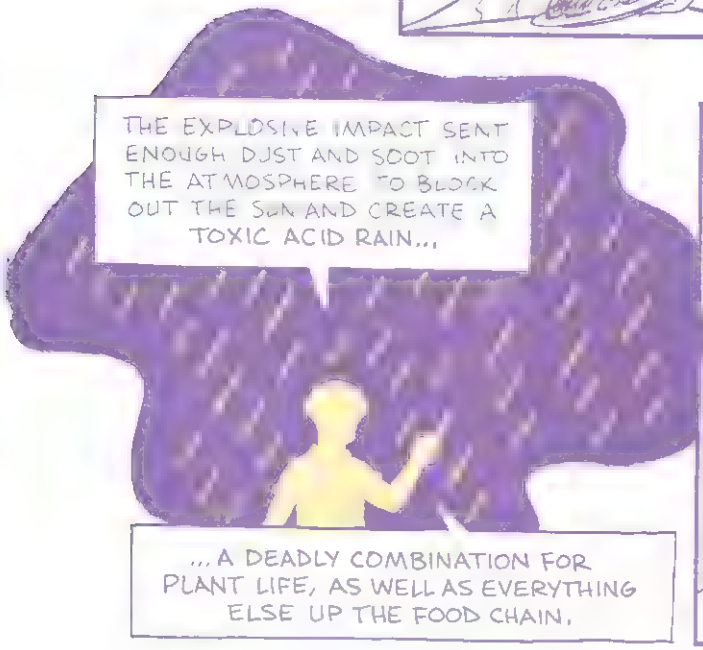
ALL THE OBSERVATORIES, THEY HAVE THEIR TELESCOPES FOCUSED ON DEEP SPACE – THEY'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO WHAT'S HAPPENING RIGHT HERE!

SOMEBODY'S GOTTA BE PREPARED. SOMEBODY'S GOTTA BE ON THE LOOKOUT. WE DON'T WANNA END UP JUST LIKE THE DINOSAURS!

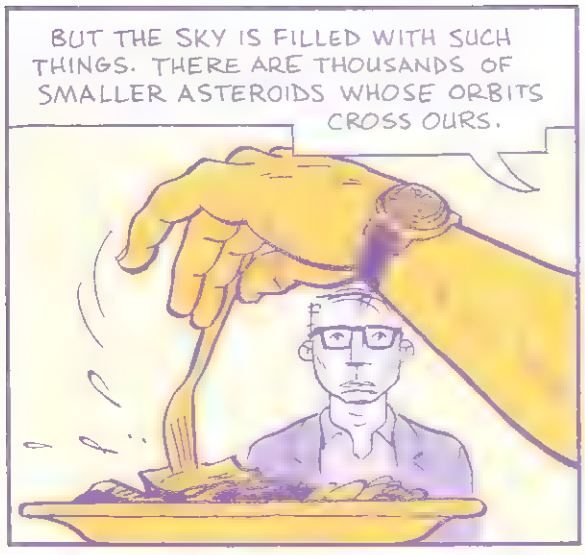
The dinosaurs?

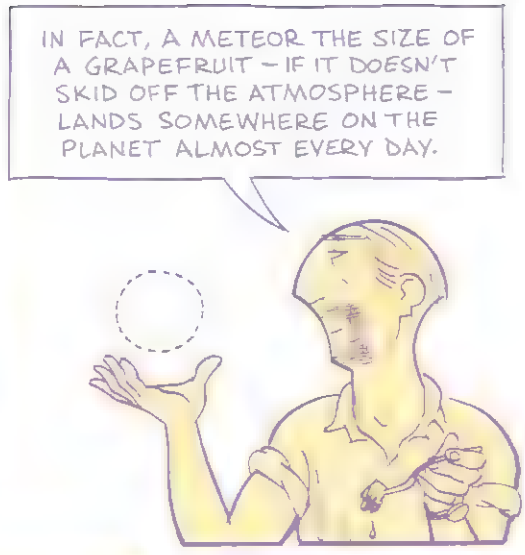
MR. DRIZZLE IS REFERRING TO THE ALVAREZ HYPOTHESIS, FIRST PROPOSED IN 1980, AND NOW RATHER WIDELY ACCEPTED.

IT SUPPOSES THAT A COMET – OR AN ASTEROID – ABOUT FIVE MILES WIDE STRUCK NEAR YUCATÁN SIXTY-FIVE MILLION YEARS AGO.

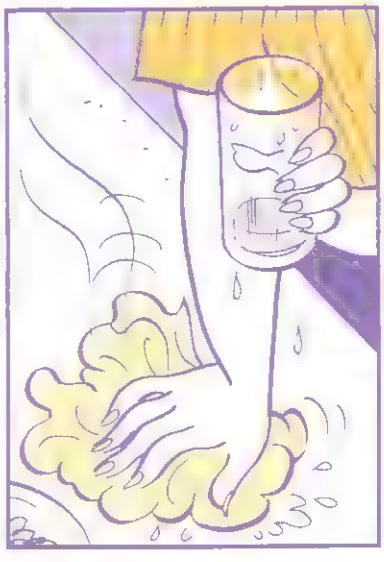

THE EXPLOSIVE IMPACT SENT ENOUGH DUST AND SOOT INTO THE ATMOSPHERE TO BLOCK OUT THE SUN AND CREATE A TOXIC ACID RAIN...
...A DEADLY COMBINATION FOR PLANT LIFE, AS WELL AS EVERYTHING ELSE UP THE FOOD CHAIN.

FORTUNATELY FOR US A COMET THAT SIZE COLLIDES WITH THE EARTH MAYBE ONCE IN A HUNDRED MILLION YEARS.


BUT THE SKY IS FILLED WITH SUCH THINGS. THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF SMALLER ASTEROIDS WHOSE ORBITS CROSS OURS.


IN FACT, A METEOR THE SIZE OF A GRAPEFRUIT – IF IT DOESN'T SKID OFF THE ATMOSPHERE – LANDS SOMEWHERE ON THE PLANET ALMOST EVERY DAY.

EVEN THE DUST ON THIS COUNTER CONTAINS MINUTE FRAGMENTS OF DEBRIS LEFT OVER FROM THE FORMATION OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.



Here's your coffee, "Professor."

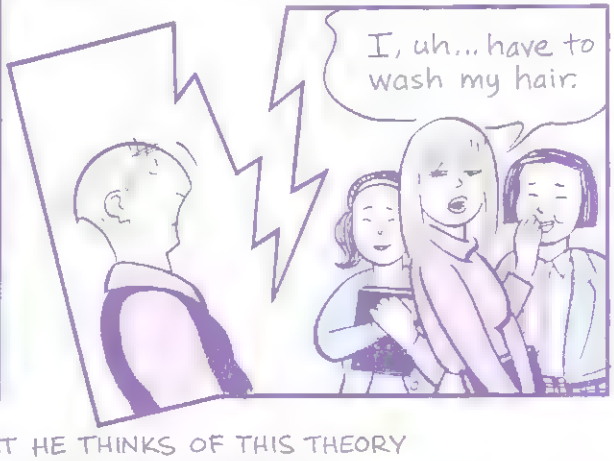
I GOTTA GO.
damn flies

ARISTOPHANES, IN PLATO'S "SYMPOSIUM," IS PURPORTED TO SUGGEST THAT HUMAN FORM WAS NOT ALWAYS AS IT IS TODAY:

ORIGINALLY, HUMANS WERE SPHERICAL, WITH FOUR ARMS, FOUR LEGS, AND TWO FACES ON EITHER SIDE OF A SINGLE HEAD.

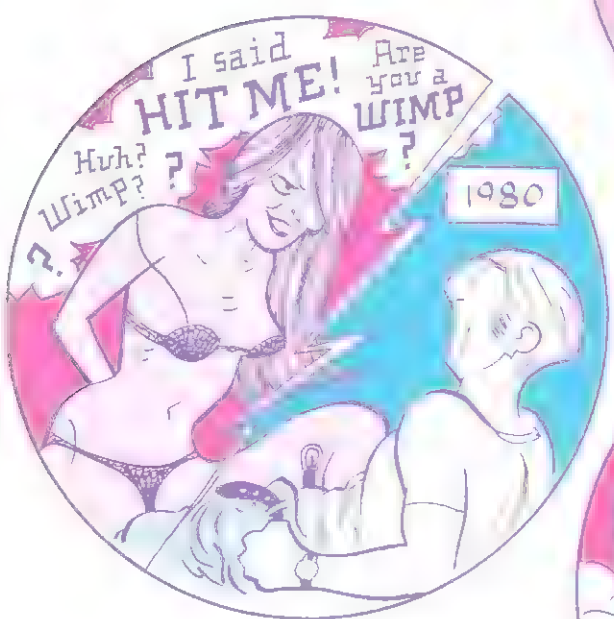
SUCH WAS THEIR HUBRIS THAT THEY DARED TO CHALLENGE THE GODS THEMSELVES.

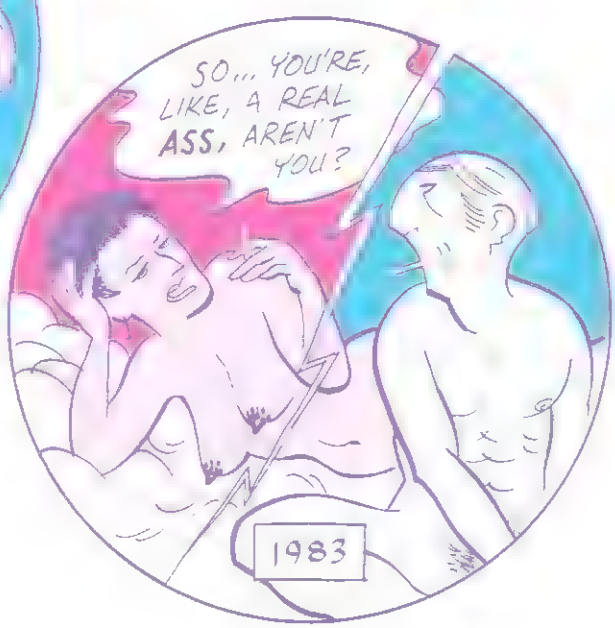
ZEUS, IN HIS WISDOM, SPLIT THE UPSTARTS IN TWO, EACH HALF BECOMING A DISTINCT ENTITY.



PLATO MAKES CLEAR WHAT HE THINKS OF THIS THEORY BY HAVING SOCRATES CASUALLY DISMISS IT.

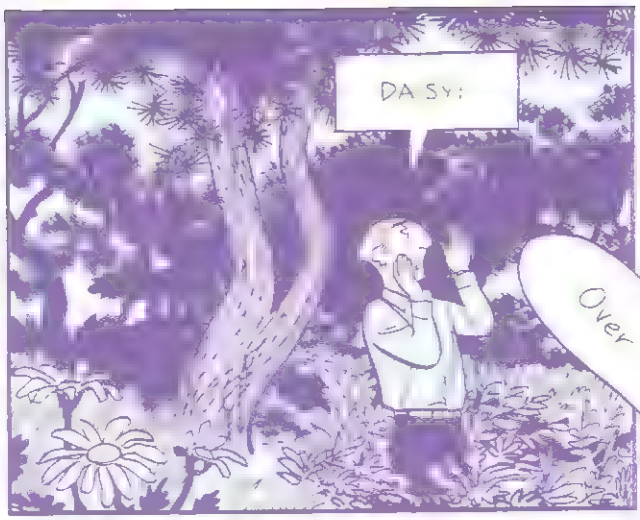
SINCE THEN..MEN AND WOMEN HAVE BEEN RUNNING AROUND IN A PANIC, SEARCHING FOR THEIR LOST COUNTERPARTS, IN A DESIRE TO BE WHOLE AGAIN.





WE SHOULD AT LEAST GIVE SOME CREDIT TO ARISTOPHANES FOR ORIGINALITY.

DAISY


DAISY:
Over

here.

All the times we've walked through these woods, and you still can't find your way?
I'M A CITY PERSON; YOU'RE A COUNTRY PERSON.

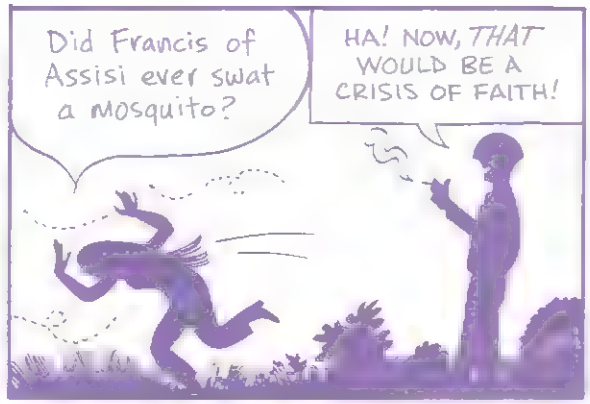
It's just a matter of paying attention.

You're always talking about transparency, right?

How is important in design that form comes from structure, but not in a cold mechanical way?

Well, even the humble pine cone has a lot to say about that.

Nature gets it right every time



ASTERIOS' AND HANA'S LIVES FOLDED INTO EACH OTHER'S WITH BARELY A WRINKLE.

How was your meeting?

OH, THE USUAL POWWOW WITH THE BIGWIGS: ALL TALK AND NO REACTION.

MMMMURRAO

EASY THERE, NOGUCHI.

MMRAOW

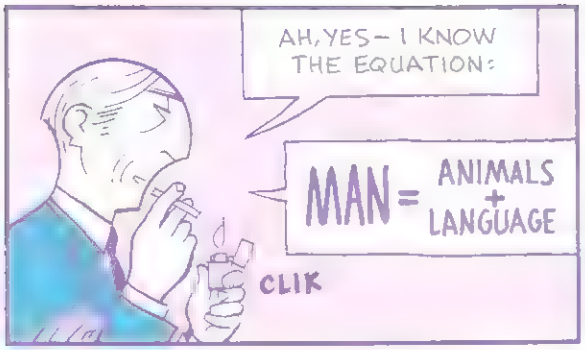
JUMP

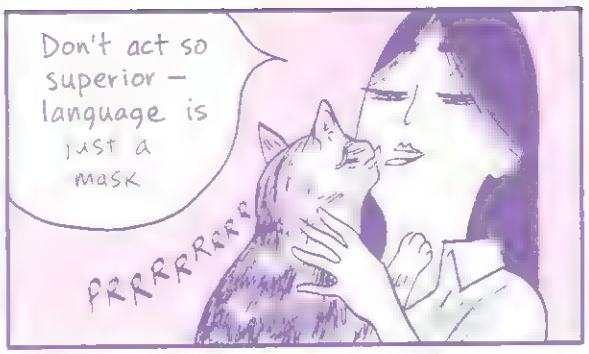
He just wants some attention.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE WANTS?

MMMMRRRRRAAAAO

He wants the same things **you** want.


AH, YES – I KNOW THE EQUATION:
MAN = ANIMALS + LANGUAGE
CLIK


Don't act so superior – language is just a mask
PRRRRRRR

I THINK LANGUAGE IS MORE THAN JUST A MASK.
Sure but...
...how old were you when you realized you could say something that wasn't true – two? three?
MLAO
MLAO

People can say anything, then do the exact opposite – even if they're not aware that's what they're doing.

But a cat will never lie to you
DIDN'T THAT USE TO BE MY SHIRT?

AND SO THEY WERE MARRIED IN THE SPRING OF 1986.
I CAN'T SEE THE HORIZON.

FIND ANYTHING?
just this
LET'S SEE
STILL GOOD.

TELL THEM ABOUT THAT TIME IN FLORENCE, AT THE UFFIZI.
No, you tell it.
NO, YOU.

Okay.
We were waiting outside, and there were about a hundred people
IT WAS REALLY ABOUT FORTY-FIVE.

and this one guy tries to push
BEFORE THAT, THOUGH, A COUPLE OF WOMEN SQUEEZED IN FRONT OF HIM.

—right— then all of a sudden, the guard starts shouting
IT WAS ACTUALLY MORE LIKE BARKING — LIKE YAP YAP YAP YAP —

Would you like to tell the story?

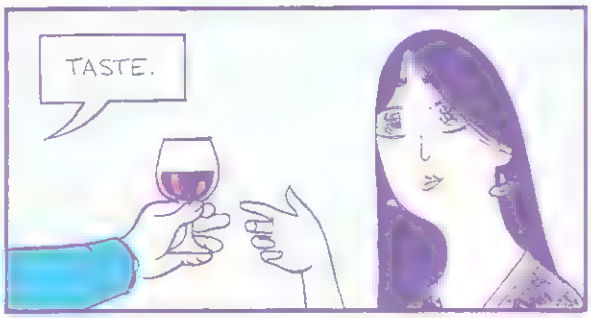
I'M JUST HELPING YOU GET IT RIGHT.

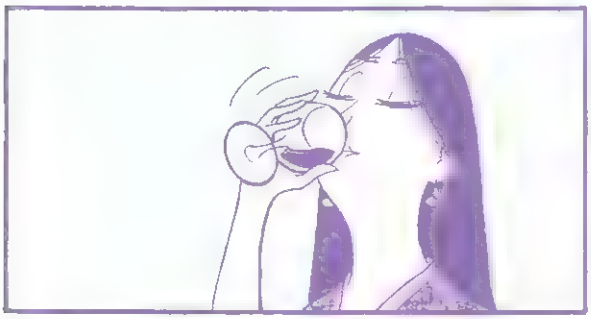
THE FIRST TIME HANA VISITED ASTERIOS IN NEW YORK WAS SOON AFTER THEY MET, IN 1985.

SHE HAD TO COME TO MANHATTAN TO DISCUSS AN EXHIBITION WITH A SOHO GALLERY, SO HE INVITED HER TO DINNER.

SHE WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THEY WEREN'T GOING OUT.

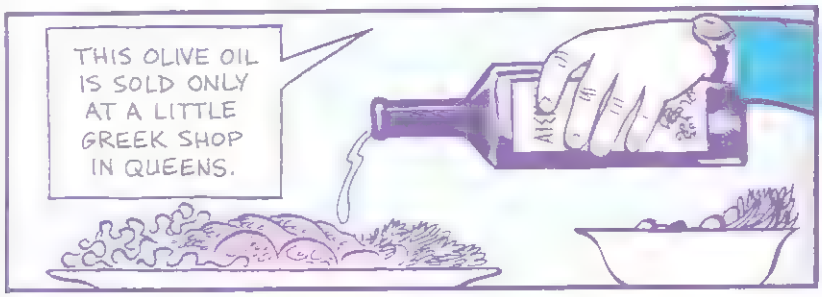
ASTERIOS TOOK GREAT PRIDE IN COOKING –
IN MAKING DINING A CELEBRATION OF HUMAN INVENTION.

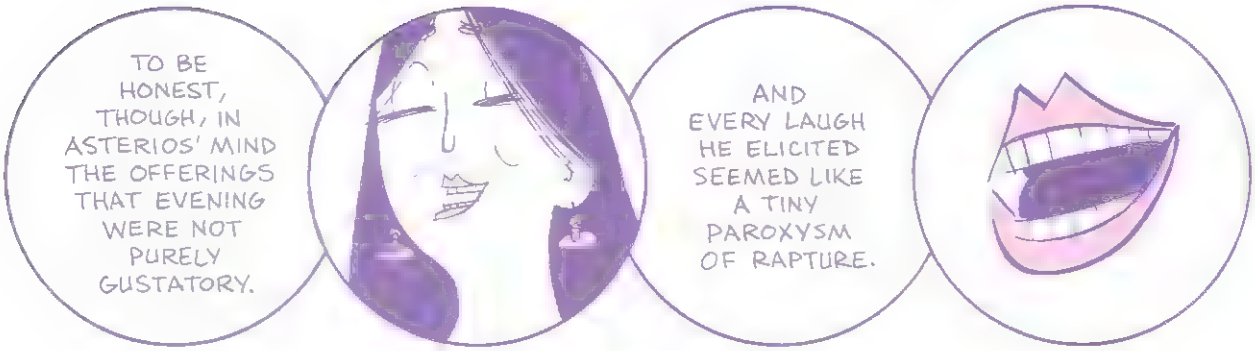


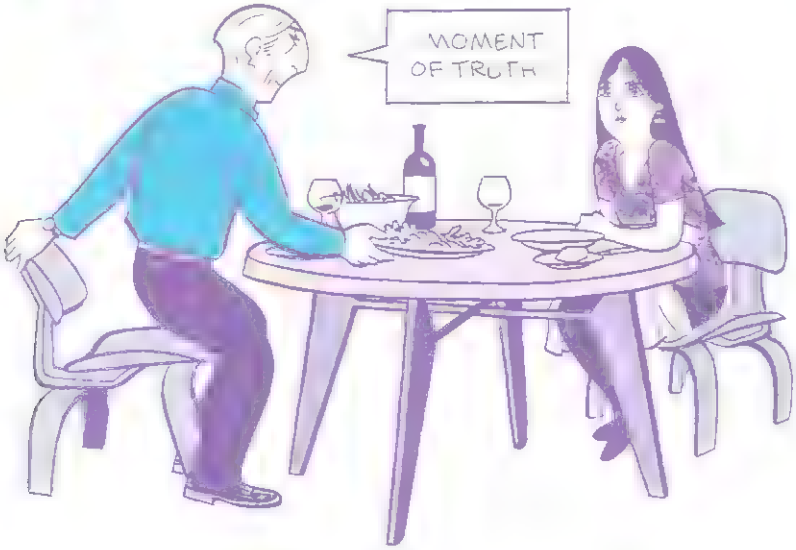


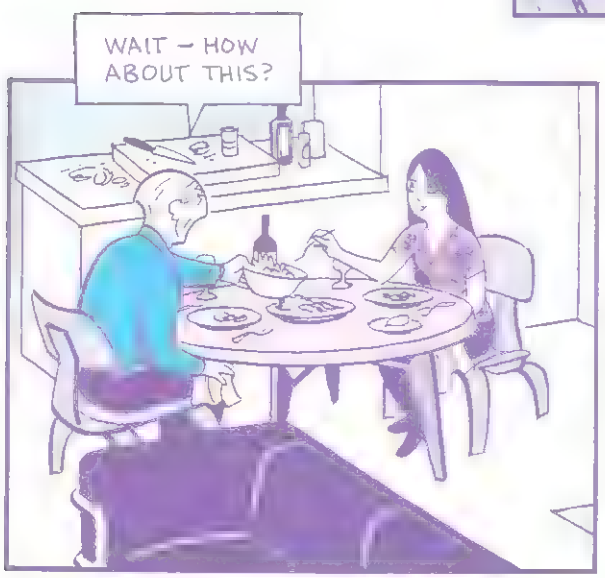
IT WAS OF A PIECE WITH HIS VIEW OF ARCHITECTURE: FOUR WALLS AND A ROOF MAKE A SHELTER, BUT EXQUISITE DESIGN IS TRANSPORTING.

NO INGREDIENT WAS INSIGNIFICANT, AND HE WOULD TRAVEL OUT OF HIS WAY TO PROCURE THE FRESHEST PRODUCE OR THE FINEST SPICES.



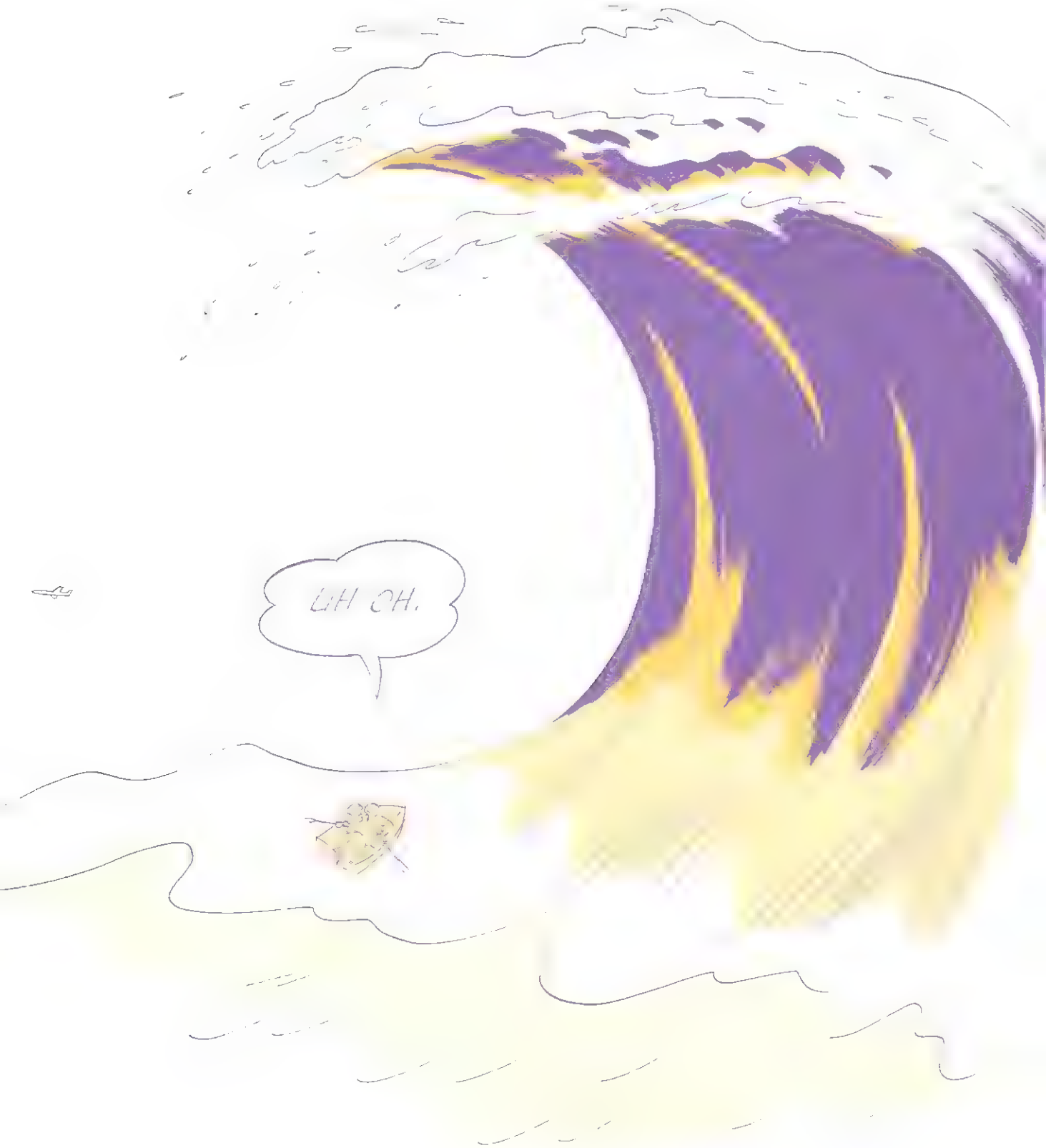




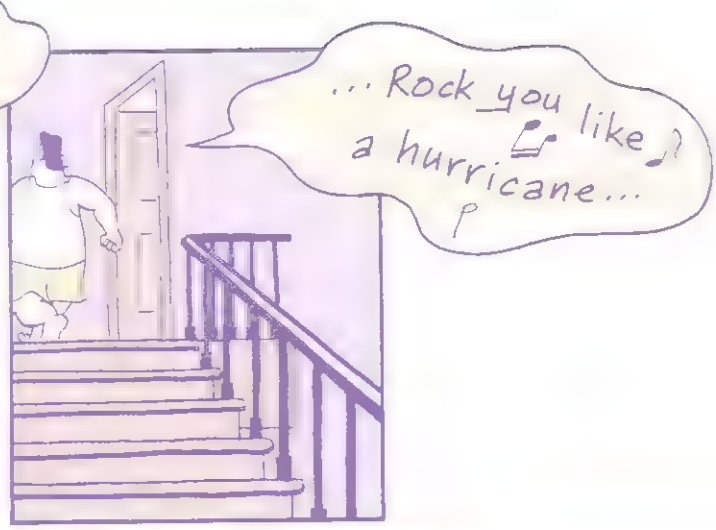


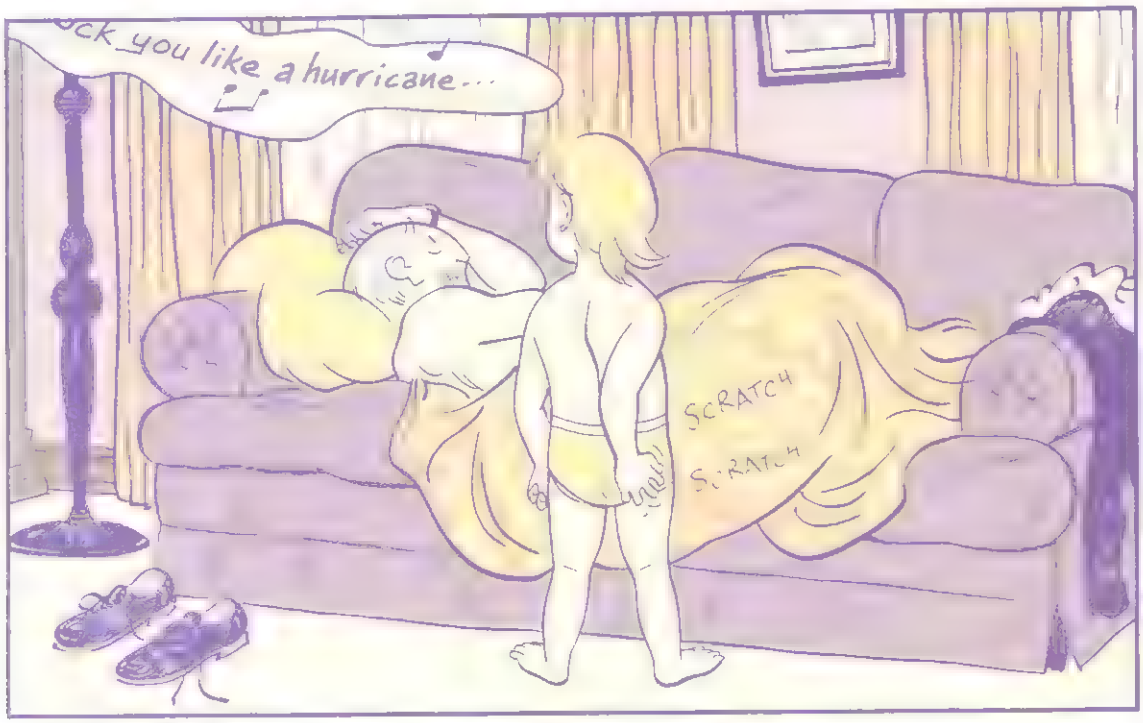
THAT WAS A NIGHT HE WOULD NEVER FORGET.

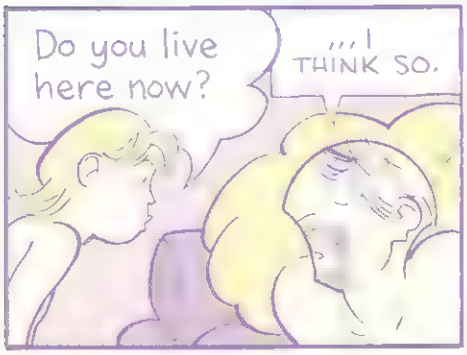
GOOD MORNING.
ARE YOU READY TO GO?
I'M NOT USED TO USING MY RIGHT HAND
THAT'S OKAY. I'LL CONTROL THE RIGHT - YOU TAKE THE LEFT.

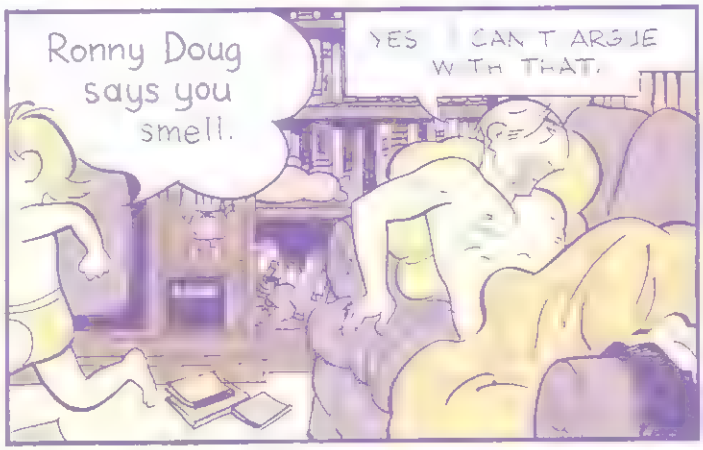

UH OH.

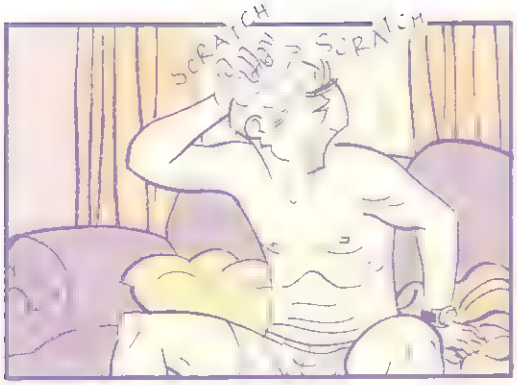
...Here I am...

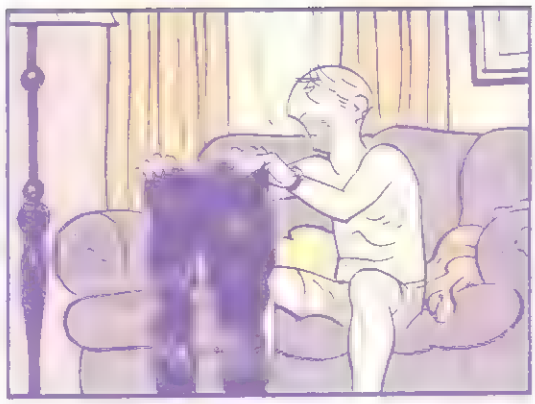

...Rock you like a hurricane...


ck you like a hurricane...
SCRATCH
SCRATCH

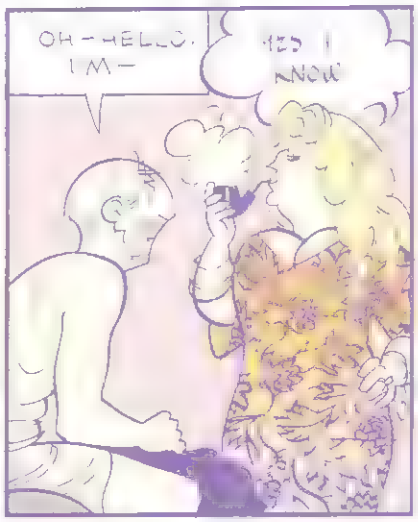

Do you live here now?
...I THINK SO.

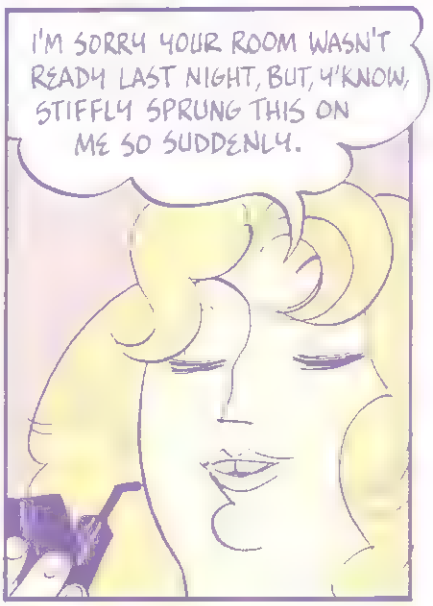

Ronny Doug says you smell.
YES I CAN'T ARGUE WITH THAT.


SCRATCH
SCRATCH

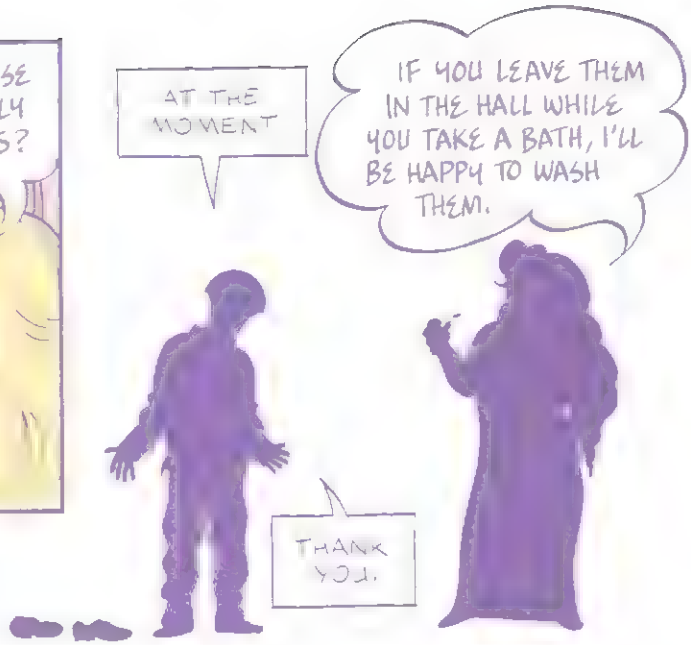


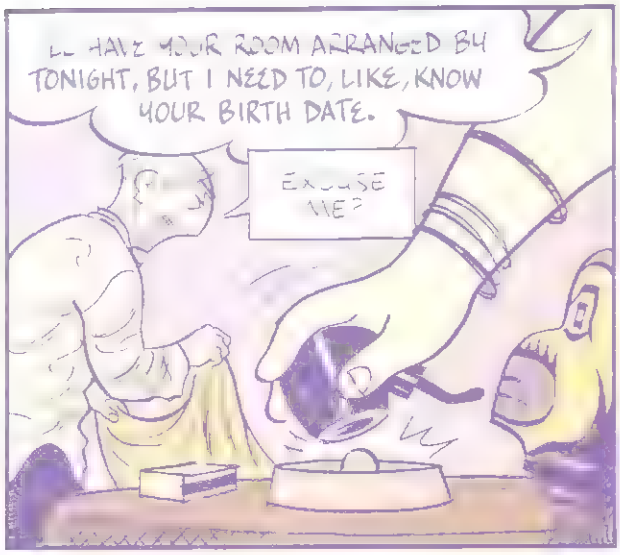
GOOD MORNING. I'M URSULA MAJOR.


OH – HELLO. I'M –
YES I KNOW

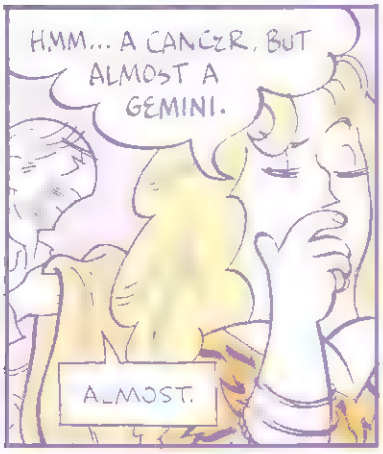

I'M SORRY YOUR ROOM WASN'T READY LAST NIGHT, BUT, Y'KNOW, STIFFLY SPRUNG THIS ON ME SO SUDDENLY.

I'M SORRY
NO NEED FOR THAT.
ARE THOSE YOUR ONLY CLOTHES?

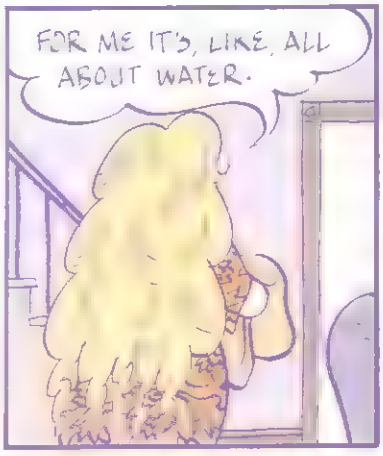

AT THE MOMENT
IF YOU LEAVE THEM IN THE HALL WHILE YOU TAKE A BATH, I'LL BE HAPPY TO WASH THEM.
THANK YOU.

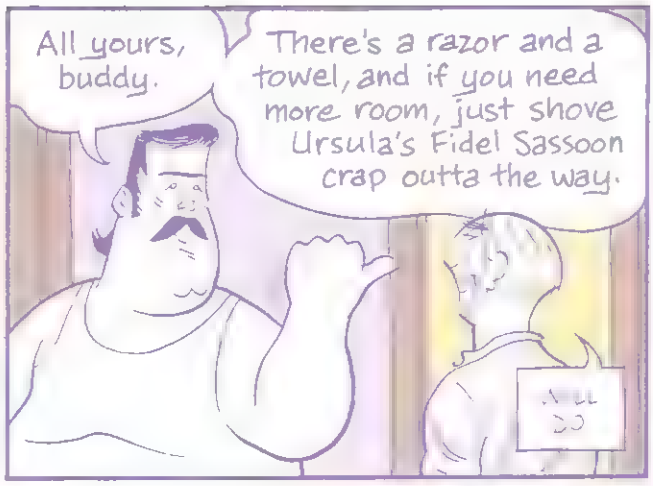

I'LL HAVE YOUR ROOM ARRANGED BY TONIGHT, BUT I NEED TO, LIKE, KNOW YOUR BIRTH DATE.
EXCUSE ME?

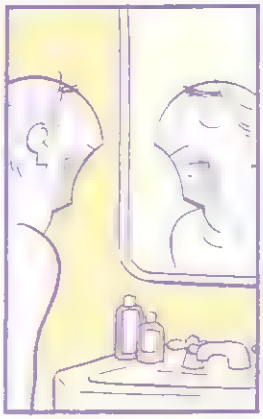
YOUR BIRTHDAY?
I JUST HAD ONE – JUNE 22.

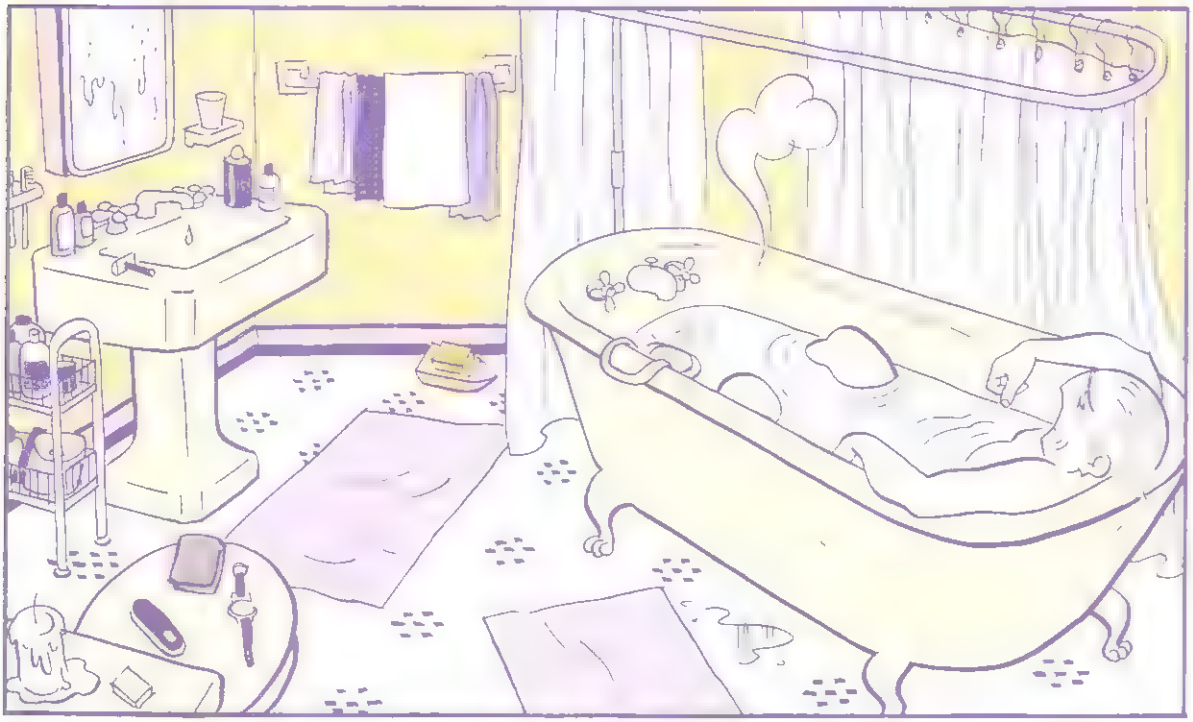

HMM... A CANCER, BUT ALMOST A GEMINI.
ALMOST.

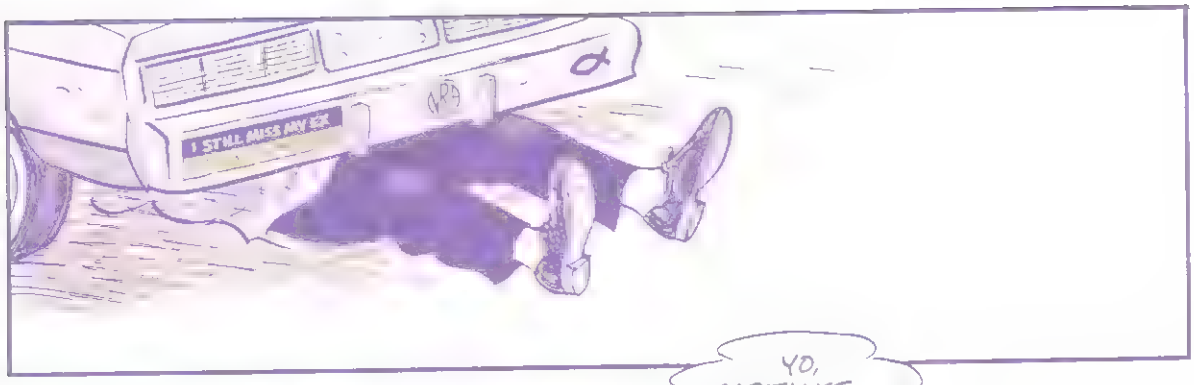
I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO WITH THAT.
ME I'M A PISCES ALL THE WAY.


FOR ME IT'S, LIKE, ALL ABOUT WATER.


All yours, buddy.
There's a razor and a towel, and if you need more room, just shove Ursula's Fidel Sassoon crap outta the way.

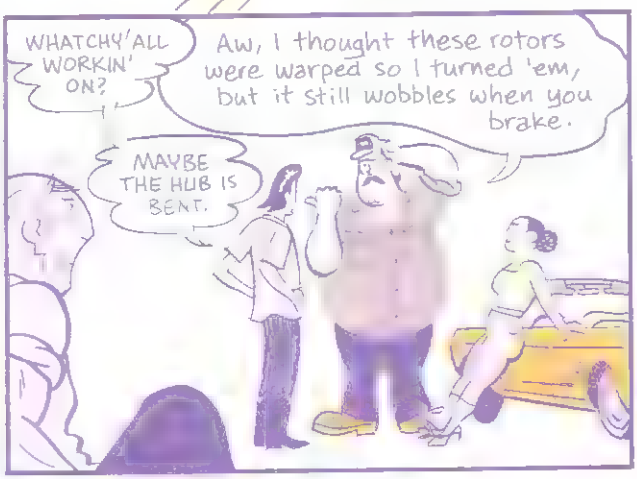


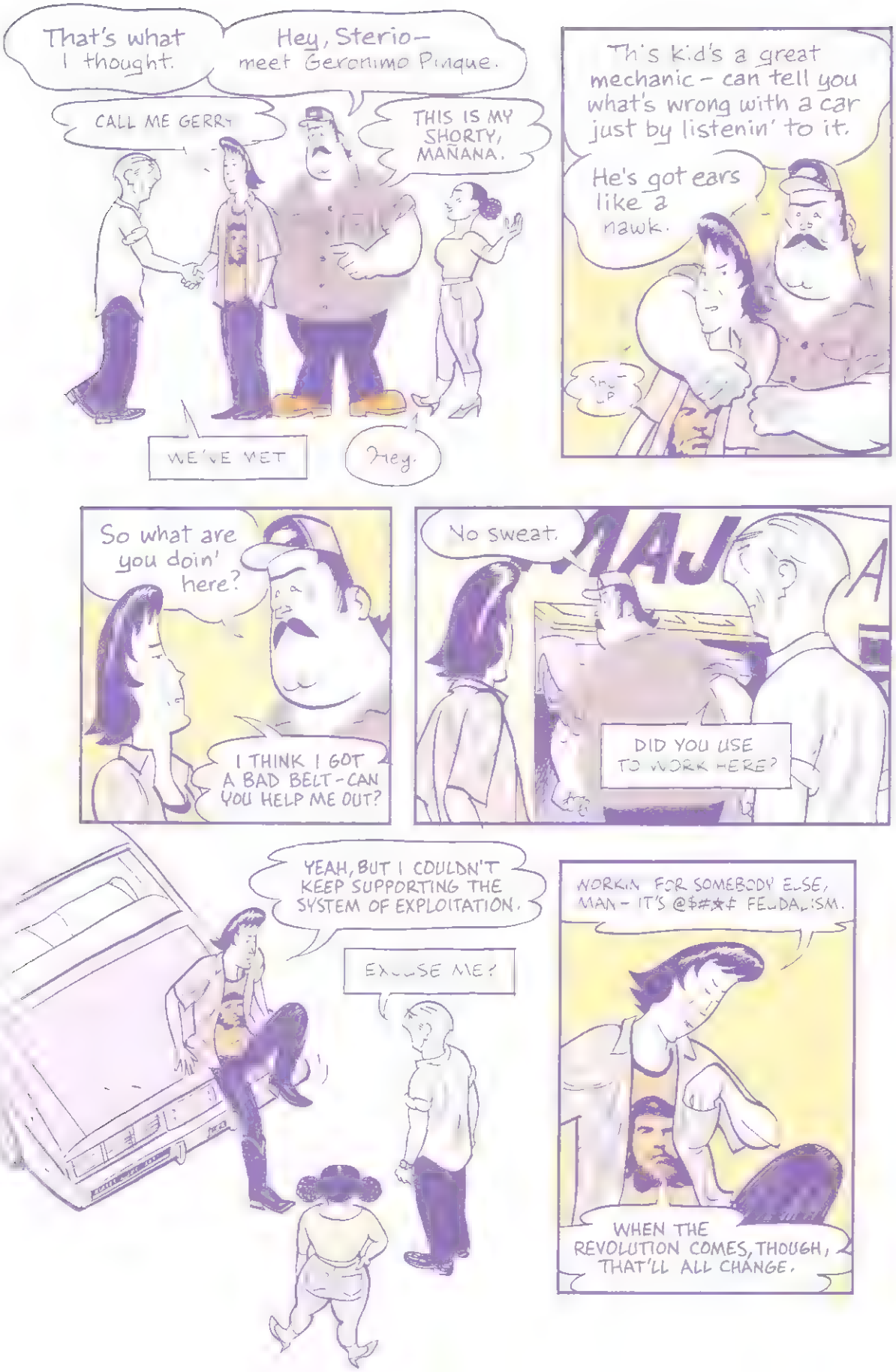


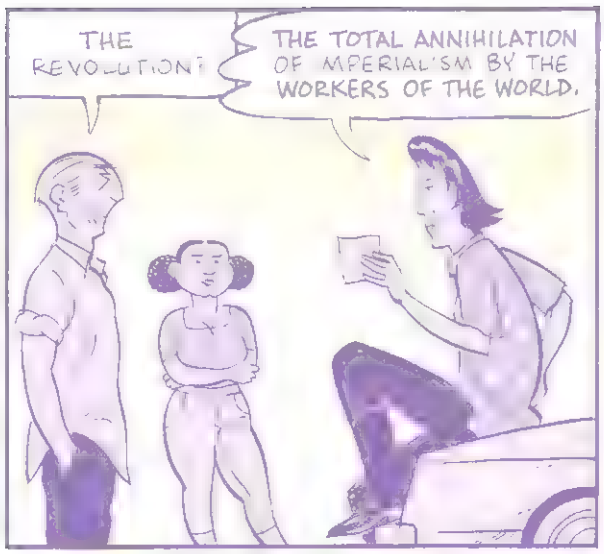

I STILL MISS MY EX

YO, CAPITALIST PIG!
MAJOR AUTO REPAIR
Hey! Comm e pinko!
BUMP

WHAT'S UP DUDE?
Not much


WHATCHY'ALL WORKIN' ON?
Aw, I thought these rotors were warped so I turned 'em, but it still wobbles when you brake.
MAYBE THE HUB IS BENT.


That's what I thought.
Hey, Sterio— meet Geronimo Pinque.
CALL ME GERRY
THIS IS MY SHORTY, MAÑANA.
WE'VE MET
Hey.
Th's kid's a great mechanic – can tell you what's wrong with a car just by listenin' to it.
He's got ears like a hawk.
So what are you doin' here?
I THINK I GOT A BAD BELT – CAN YOU HELP ME OUT?
No sweat.
DID YOU USE TO WORK HERE?
YEAH, BUT I COULDN'T KEEP SUPPORTING THE SYSTEM OF EXPLOITATION.
EXCUSE ME?
WORKIN FOR SOMEBODY ELSE, MAN – IT'S @$#★£ FEUDALISM.
WHEN THE REVOLUTION COMES, THOUGH, THAT'LL ALL CHANGE.

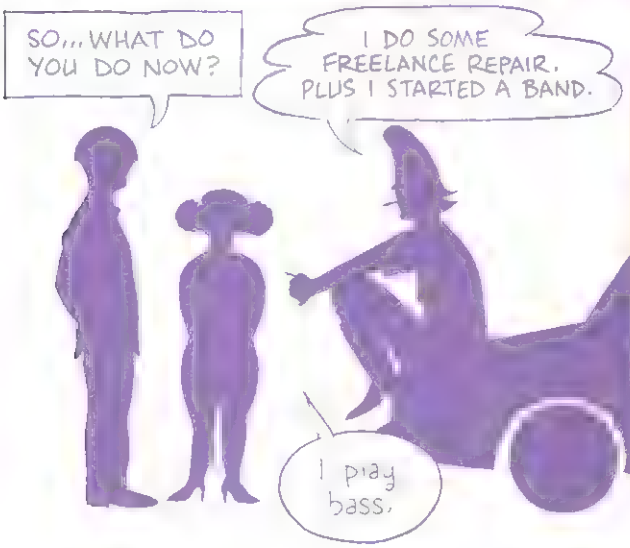

THE REVOLUTION?
THE TOTAL ANNIHILATION OF IMPERIALISM BY THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD.

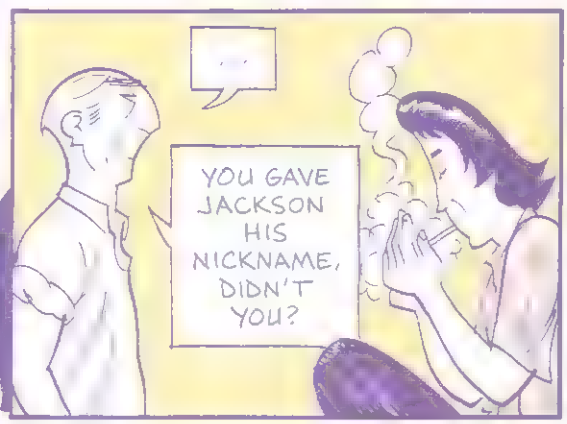
AH... THAT REVOLUTION
IT'S COMIN', DUDE.
LIKE MAO SAID, THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF WAR: JUST AND UNJUST...

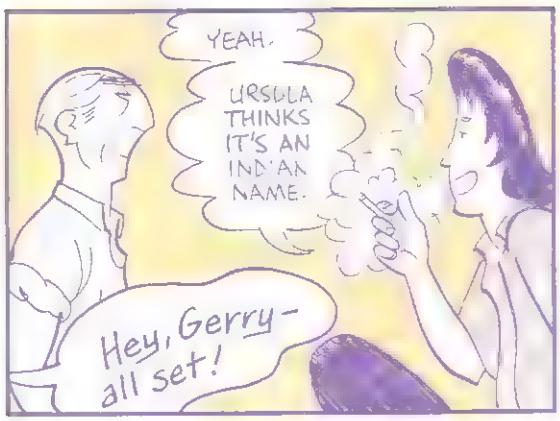
AND THE NEW CAN'T BE BUILT TILL THE OLD IS WIPED CLEAN.
ON A BLANK SHEET CAN BE WRITTEN THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CHARACTERS.

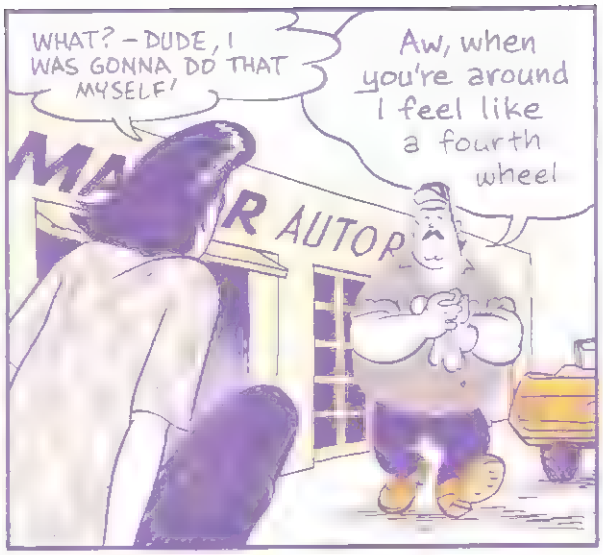
@$#★¢ RIGHT.

DUDE. AMERICANS DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH @$#★¢ POWER THEY HAVE.
MOST OF 'EM THINK DEMOCRACY MEANS YOU GET A CHOICE BETWEEN COKE AND PEPSI

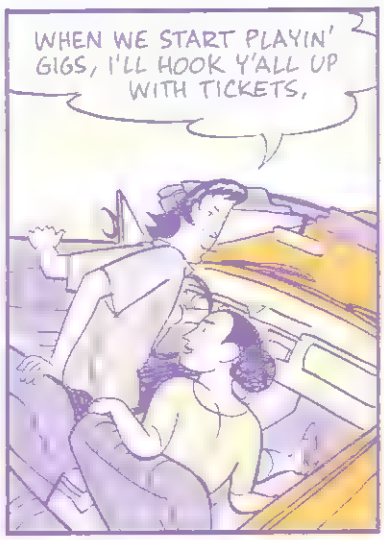

SO... WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?
I DO SOME FREELANCE REPAIR. PLUS I STARTED A BAND.
I play bass.


...
YOU GAVE JACKSON HIS NICKNAME, DIDN'T YOU?

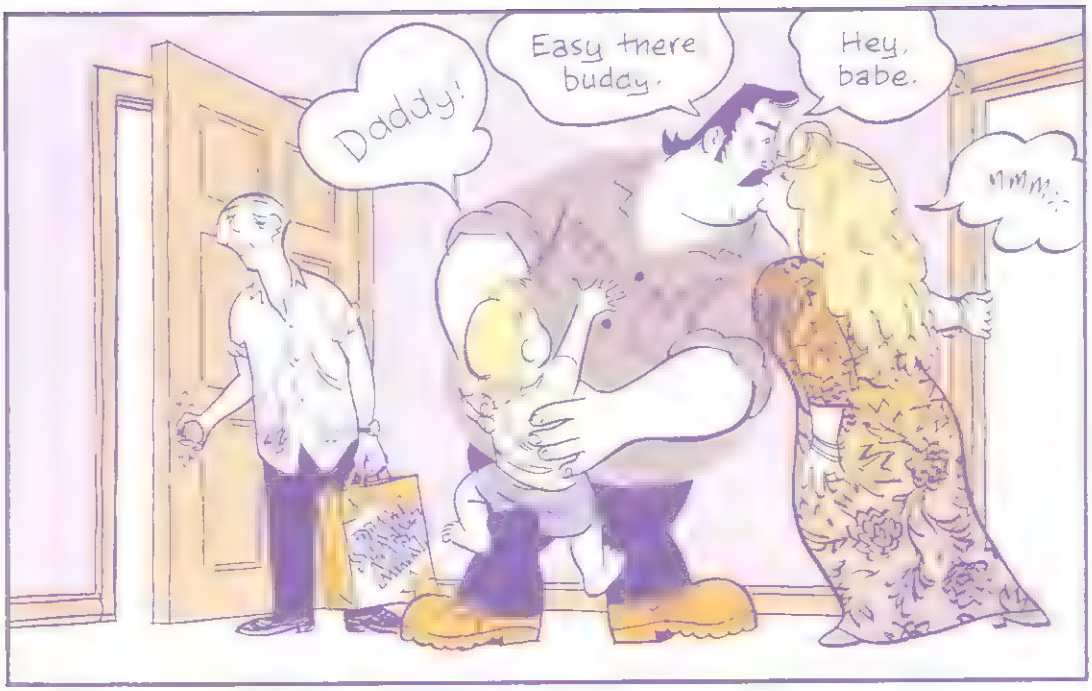

YEAH.
URSULA THINKS IT'S AN IND'AN NAME.
Hey, Gerry – all set!


WHAT? – DUDE, I WAS GONNA DO THAT MYSELF!
Aw, when you're around I feel like a fourth wheel
R AUTOR

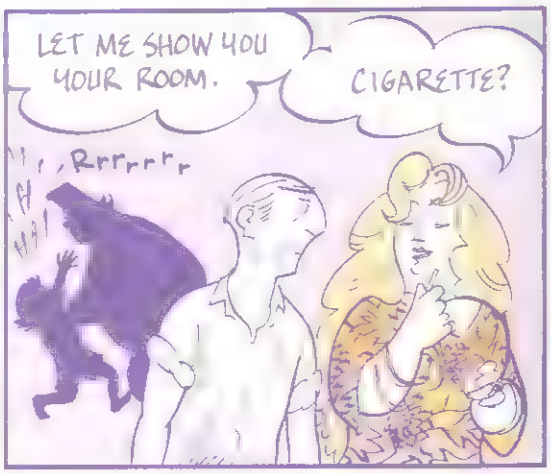
I'LL PAY YOU BACK, BOSS.
HEY, CHANGE THOSE SHOCKS, MAN.
BOUNCE BOUNCE


WHEN WE START PLAYIN' GIGS, I'LL HOOK Y'ALL UP WITH TICKETS.

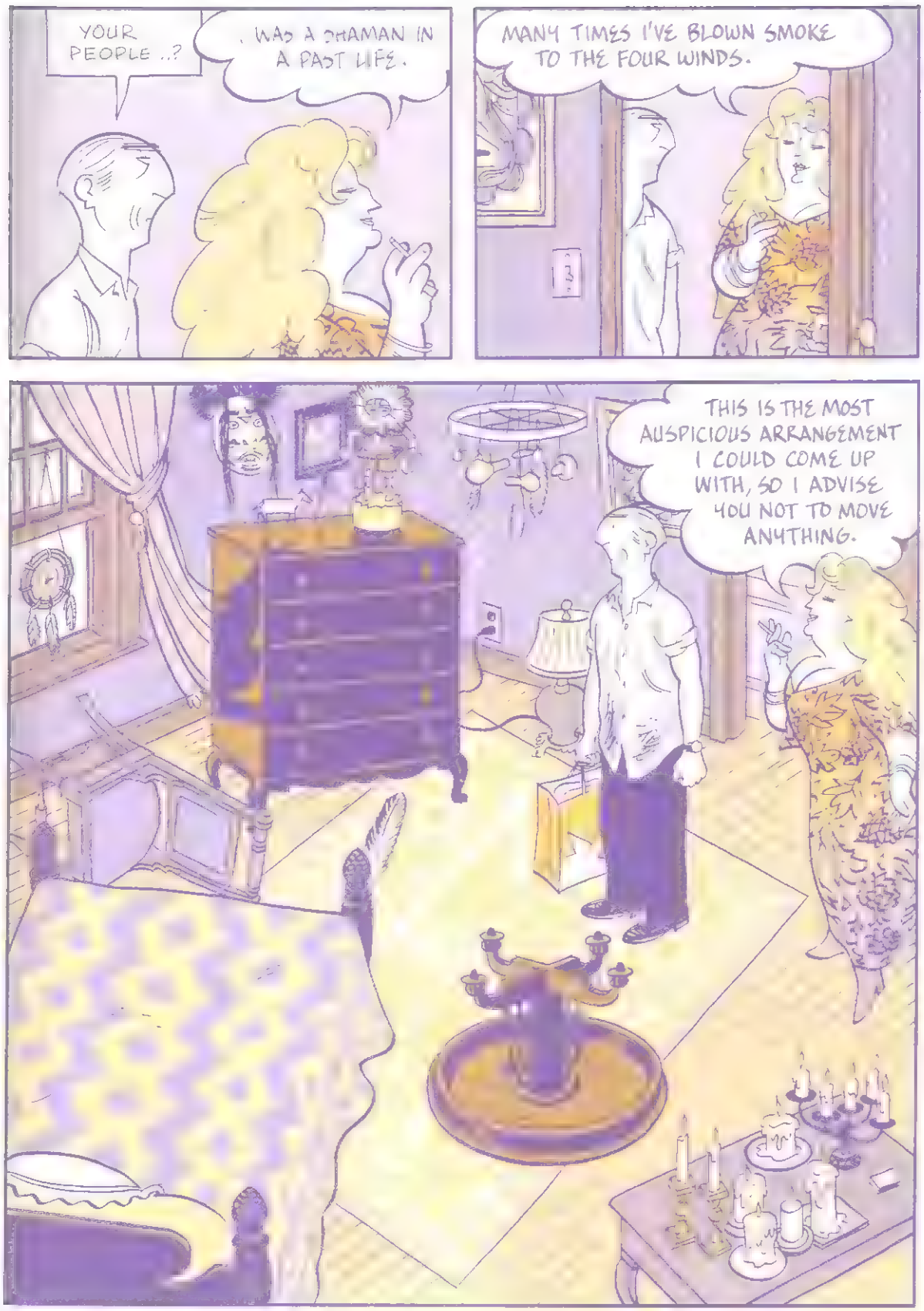
AND STIFF – IF THE HUB'S NOT BENT, CHECK AND SEE IF THE STEERING RACK'S COMIN' LOOSE.
Bye.
SCREEEEE

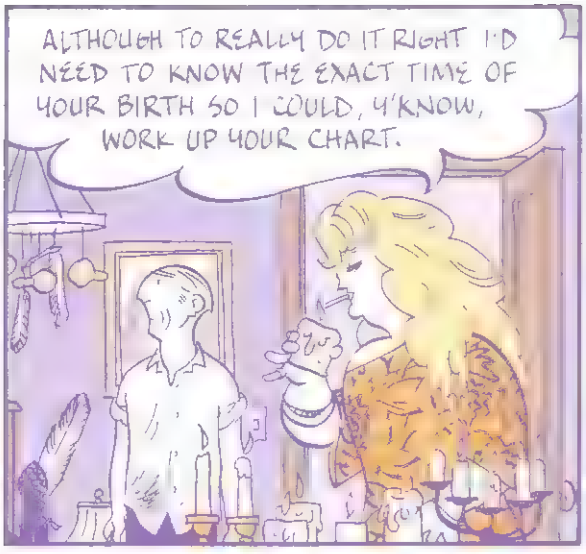

Daddy!
Easy there buddy.
Hey, babe.
MMM...

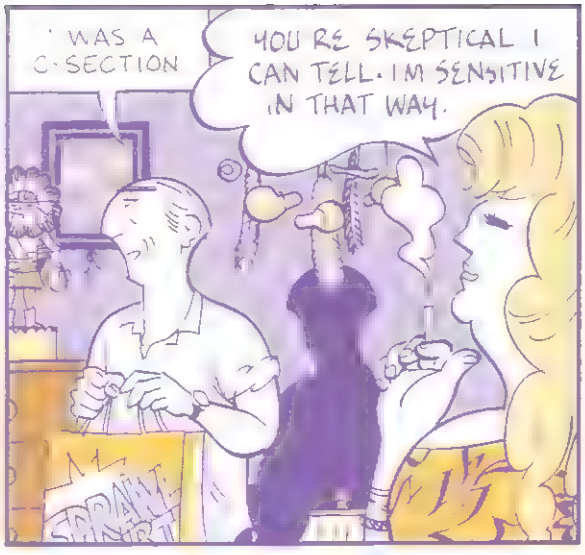
DINNER'LL BE READY IN ABOUT HALF AN HOUR.
Grrrrrrrr
HA HA HA HA HA HA

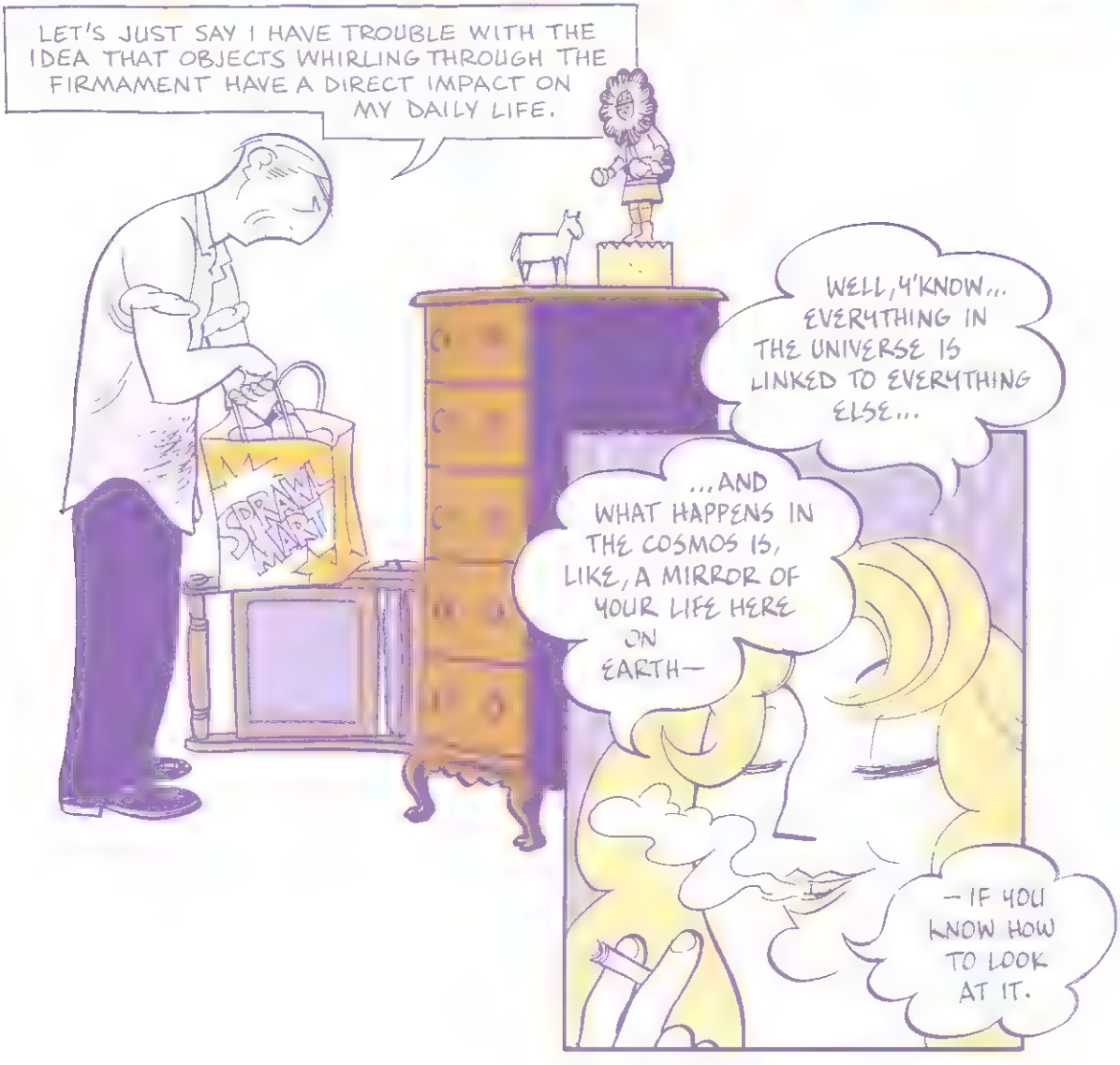

LET ME SHOW YOU YOUR ROOM.
CIGARETTE?
Rrrrrr

I QUIT.
HMM. TOBACCO IS SACRED TO MY PEOPLE.


YOUR PEOPLE ..?
. WAS A SHAMAN IN A PAST LIFE.
MANY TIMES I'VE BLOWN SMOKE TO THE FOUR WINDS.
THIS IS THE MOST AUSPICIOUS ARRANGEMENT I COULD COME UP WITH, SO I ADVISE YOU NOT TO MOVE ANYTHING.


ALTHOUGH TO REALLY DO IT RIGHT I'D NEED TO KNOW THE EXACT TIME OF YOUR BIRTH SO I COULD, Y'KNOW, WORK UP YOUR CHART.

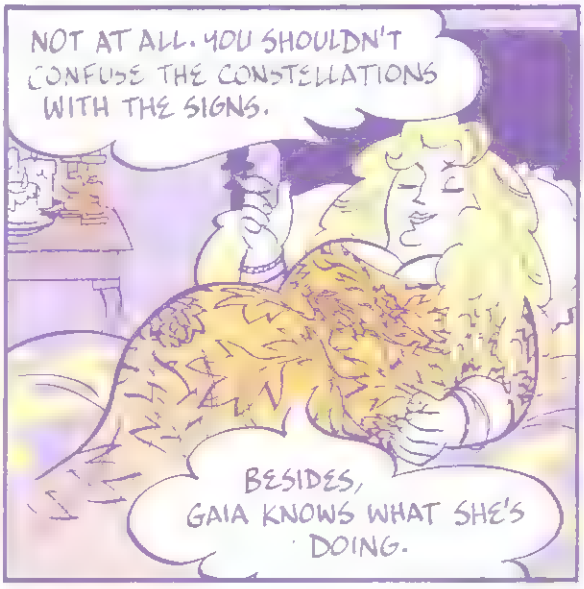

I WAS A C-SECTION
YOU'RE SKEPTICAL I CAN TELL. I'M SENSITIVE IN THAT WAY.


LET'S JUST SAY I HAVE TROUBLE WITH THE IDEA THAT OBJECTS WHIRLING THROUGH THE FIRMAMENT HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON MY DAILY LIFE.
WELL, Y'KNOW... EVERYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE IS LINKED TO EVERYTHING ELSE...
...AND WHAT HAPPENS IN THE COSMOS IS, LIKE, A MIRROR OF YOUR LIFE HERE ON EARTH—
—IF YOU KNOW HOW TO LOOK AT IT.

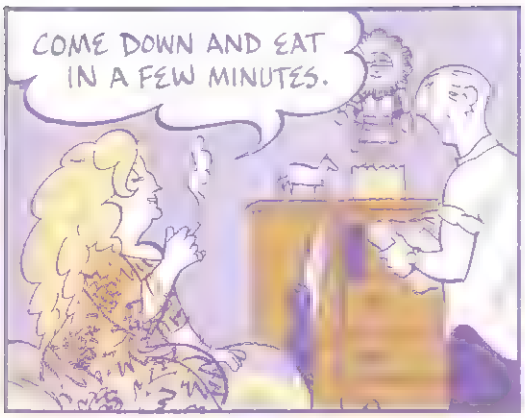
THAT'S WHAT THE ANCIENT WISDOM TEACHES US.
TAP
TAP
I'M NOT ONE TO DISPARAGE THE ANCIENTS, BUT...
...DON'T YOU THINK MOST OF WHAT WE CALL "ANCIENT WISDOM" IS LITTLE MORE THAN CODIFIED SUPERSTITION?

OF COURSE! BUT WHEN YOU'VE LIVED AS MANY TIMES AS I HAVE, YOU LEARN TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE.
OF COURSE

SO, I SUPPOSE IT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU THAT, VIEWED FROM EARTH, THE CONSTELLATIONS HAVE SHIFTED BY ABOUT A MONTH SINCE PTOLEMY'S TIME?


NOT AT ALL. YOU SHOULDN'T CONFUSE THE CONSTELLATIONS WITH THE SIGNS.
BESIDES, GAIA KNOWS WHAT SHE'S DOING.

LOOK, Y'KNOW, SCIENTISTS TOOK MOLLUSKS AND FOUND THAT EVEN IN THE LAB, THEY ORIENT THEIR MOVEMENT ACCORDING TO THE PHASE OF THE LUNAR MONTH.
AND OYSTERS TAKEN FROM LONG ISLAND AND RELOCATED TO DARK TANKS IN THE MIDWEST ALTER THEIR OPENING AND CLOSING TO COINCIDE WITH TIDES THAT, LIKE, COULD EXIST IN THAT LOCATION, BUT DON'T.
SOLAR ACTIVITY CREATES EXTREMELY LOW FREQUENCY ELECTROMAGNETIC WAVES, AND THEY AFFECT ALL KINDS OF THINGS, LIKE THE WAY WHEAT SPROUTS, AND THE WAY BACTERIA GROWS, AND THE WAY INSECTS BEHAVE...
IT'S WORTH CONSIDERING.
... MAYBE THE CHALDEANS WERE ONTO SOMETHING WHEN THEY DISCOVERED THE ZODIAC, Y'KNOW?
SO WITH ALL THAT GOING ON...


COME DOWN AND EAT IN A FEW MINUTES.

AND ASTERIOS..
...WHILE YOU'RE STAYING HERE, DON'T WORRY IF YOU HAPPEN TO FALL IN LOVE WITH ME...

EVERYBODY DOES...
I'M A GODDESS.

ABSTRACTIONS

IN ADDITION, HE'S ALWAYS BEEN FOND OF ANALOGUES AND METAPHORS – SUCH AS THE DIVISION OF AN HOUR INTO WEDGES OF A CIRCLE –

– AND THE MORE UNLIKELY THE CORRESPONDENCE, THE MORE HE ENJOYS IT.

• Ithaca

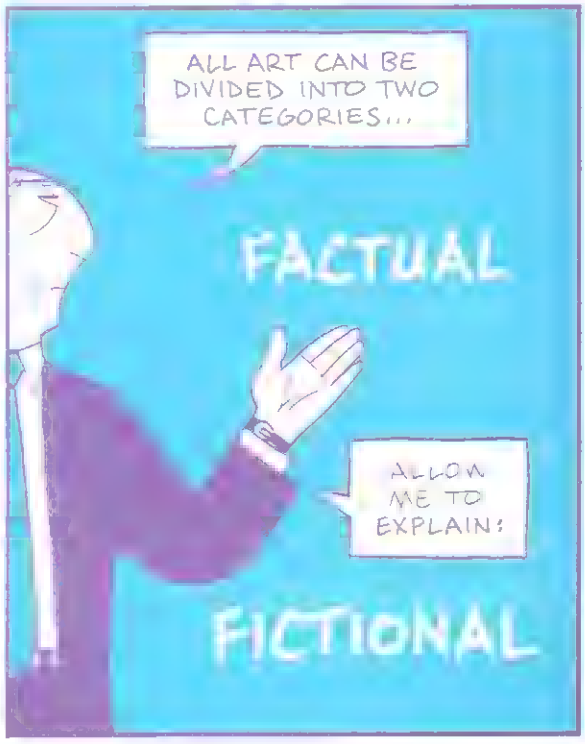
ONCE, ON A DRIVE FROM ITHACA TO NEW YORK, HANA WAS KNITTING IN THE PASSENGER SEAT

• New York

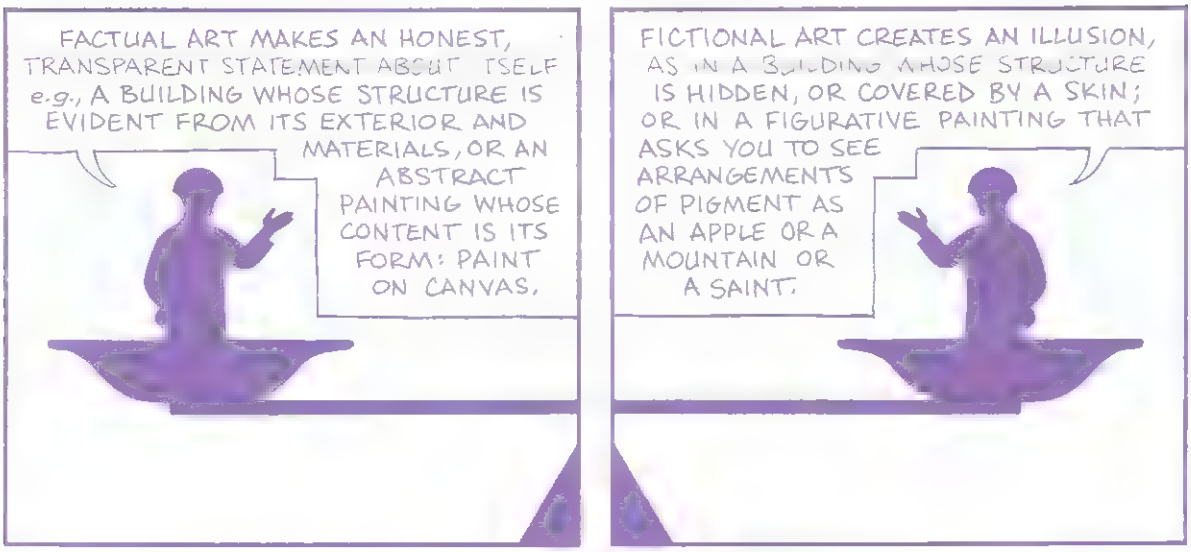
EVER SINCE, HE'S THOUGHT OF THE DISTANCE AS A MATTER OF YARN-INCHES.

THIS DESIRE TO VIEW THE WORLD THROUGH A FILTER - TO SUPERIMPOSE A RATIONAL SYSTEM ON TO ITS SEEMING RANDOMNESS - IS REVEALED IN HIS OWN FAVORITE IDEATION.

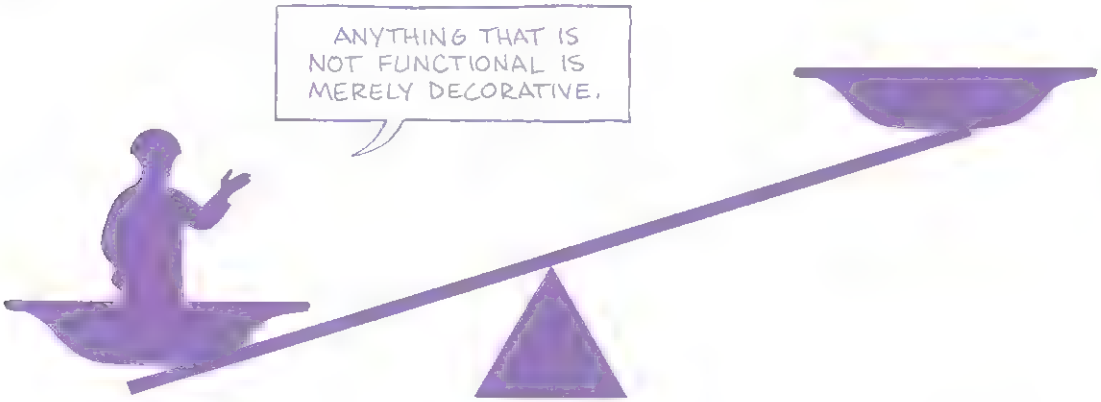
IT IS A FORMULATION THAT IS APPLIED WITH PRISMATIC VARIETY.



THIS CONSTRUCTION APPEARS TO CONFER EQUAL CREDENCE TO BOTH SIDES.

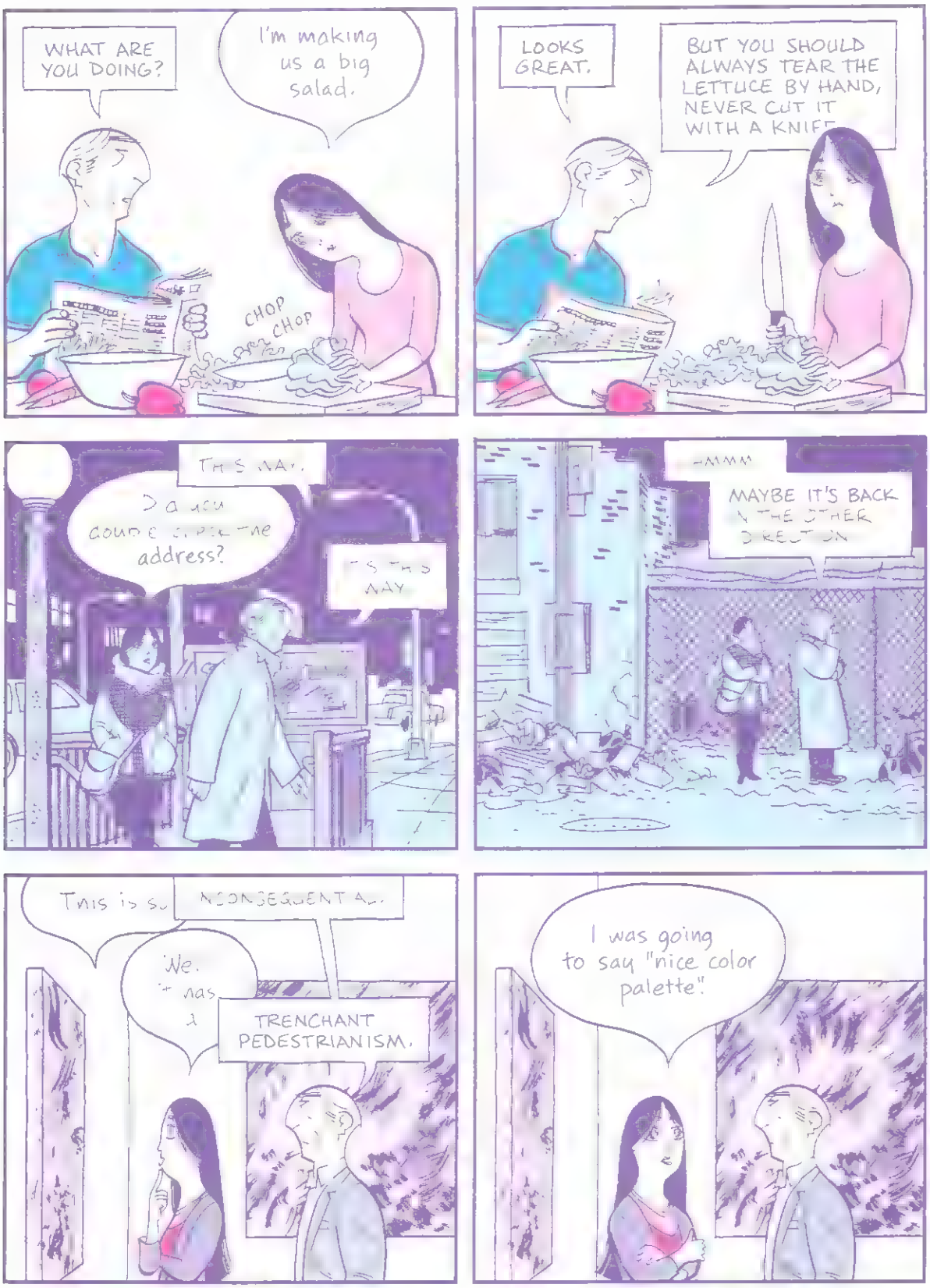


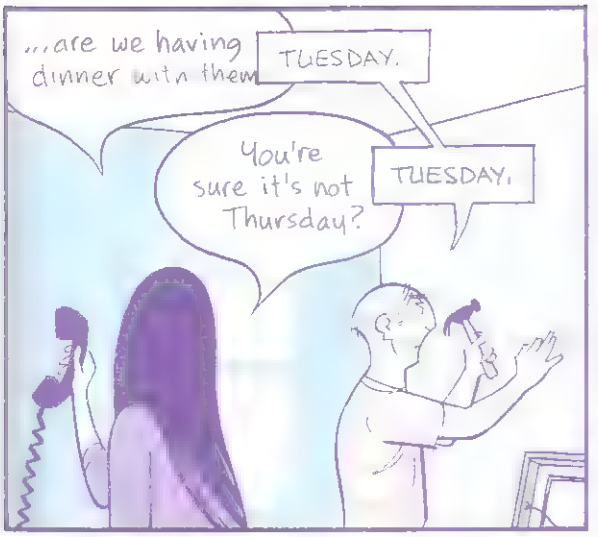
BUT ELABORATION OFTEN EXPOSES ASTERIOS' PREDILECTIONS.

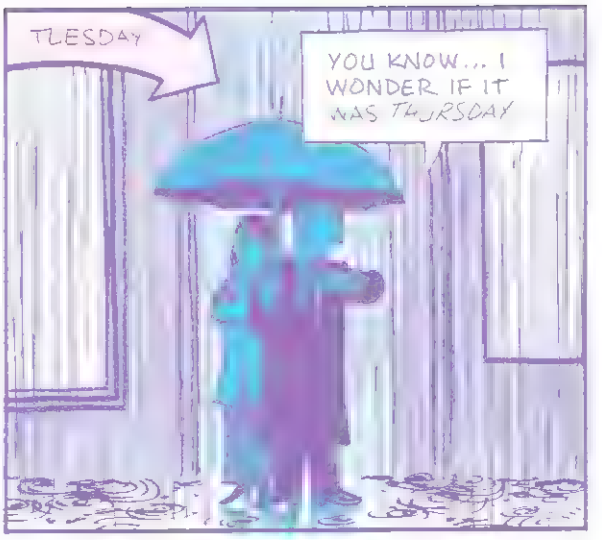


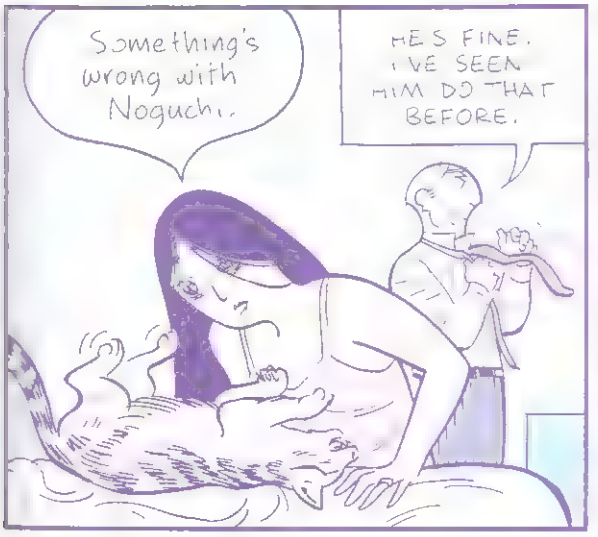
THUS, "TRUTHFULNESS" HAS BECOME HIS POLESTAR.

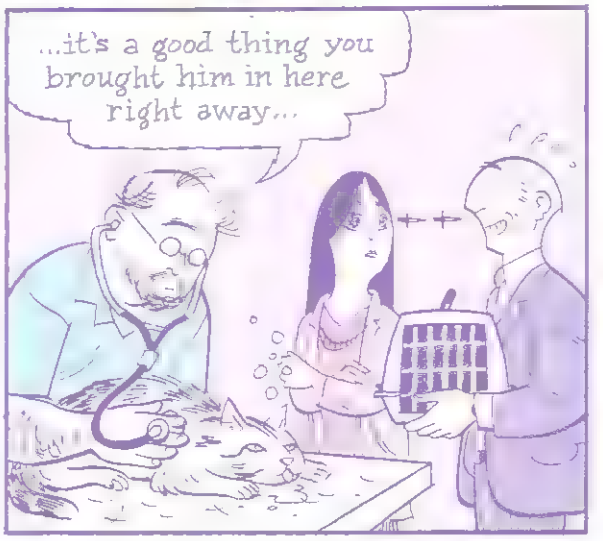
HIS ASPIRATION TOWARD THE TRUE MANIFESTS ITSELF IN OTHER WAYS AS WELL.




...are we having dinner with them
TUESDAY.
You're sure it's not Thursday?
TUESDAY.


TUESDAY
YOU KNOW... I WONDER IF IT WAS THURSDAY


Something's wrong with Noguchi.
HE'S FINE. I'VE SEEN HIM DO THAT BEFORE.

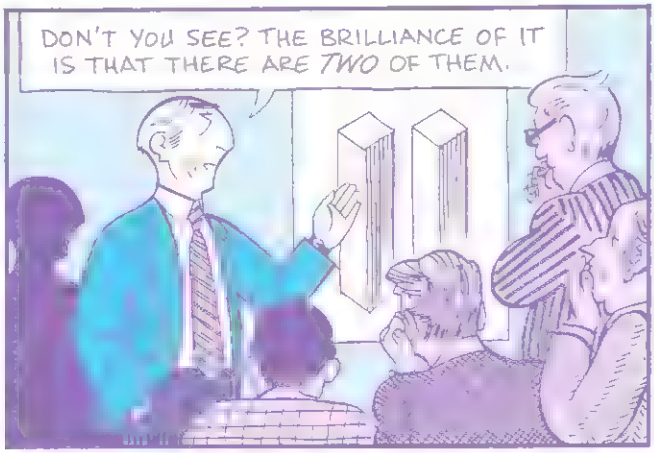

...it's a good thing you brought him in here right away...

Do you think I'm stupid?
WHAT? NO!
OF COURSE NOT!
NO!

Then why do you always assume I'm wrong?

IN THE CERTITUDE OF SYMMETRY, THE CONSONENCE OF COUNTERPOISE, ASTERIOS FOUND A MEASURE OF SOLACE.

HE WAS AN EARLY DEFENDER OF THE MUCH-MALIGNED WORLD TRADE TOWERS.

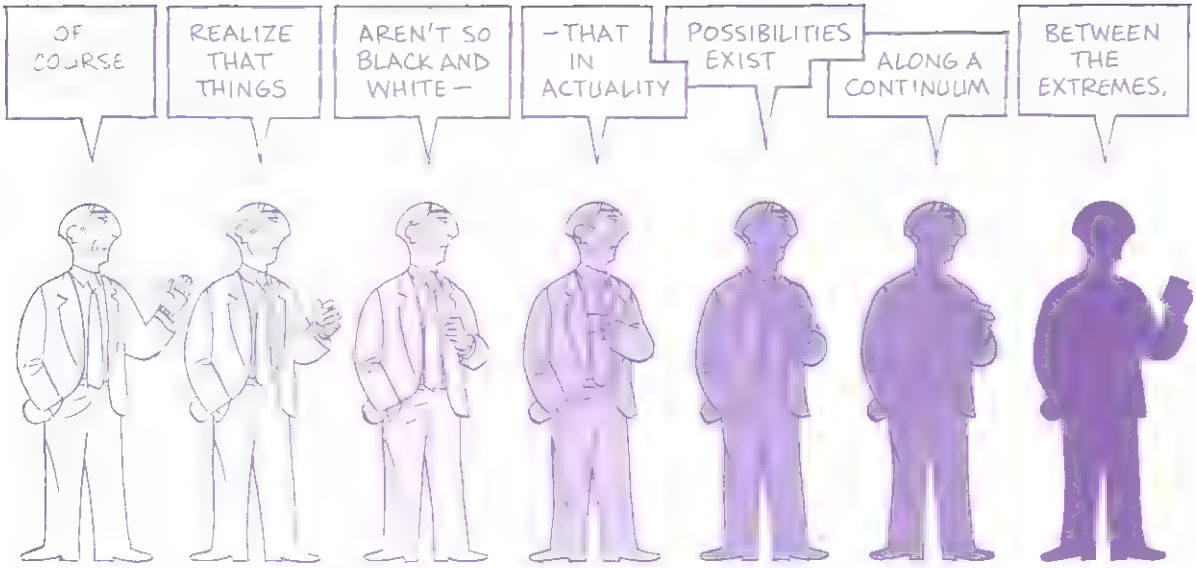


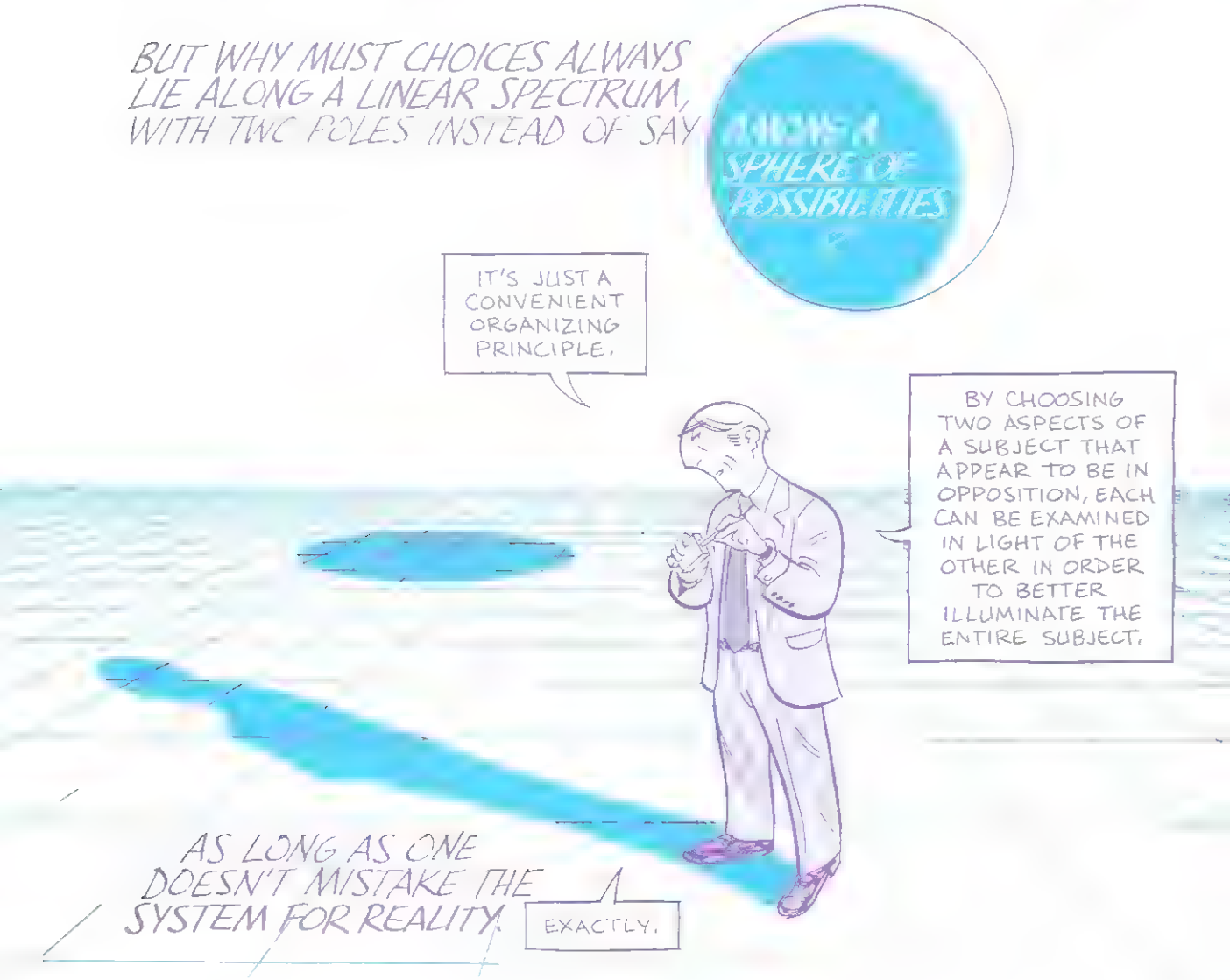
HIS OWN DESIGNS ECHOED THIS ELOQUENT EQUILIBRIUM.

PARALLEL PARK
MIXED USE COMPLEX 1981
(FUNDING WITHDRAWN)

THE AKIMBO ARMS
APARTMENT BUILDING, 1983
(NEVER BUILT)

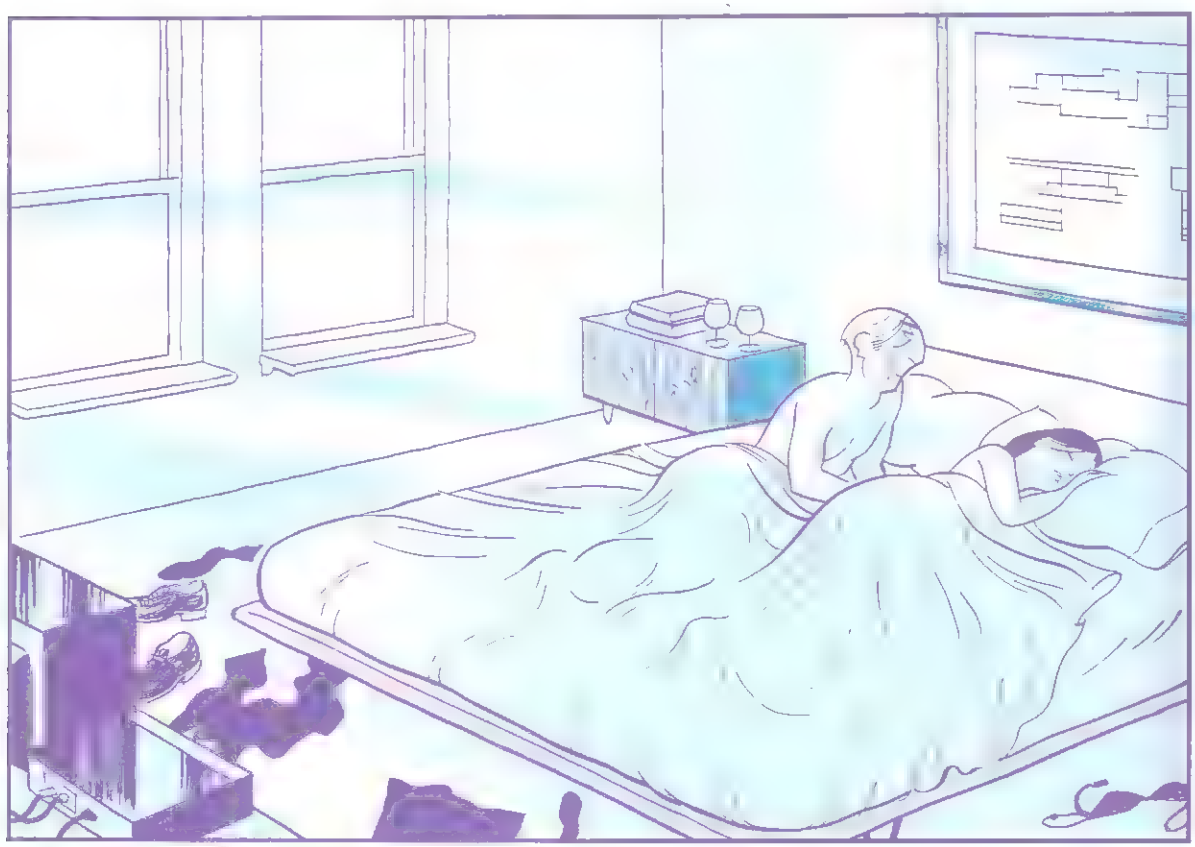
DUALITY IS ROOTED IN NATURE: THE BRAIN IS DIVIDED INTO RIGHT AND LEFT HEMISPHERES, ELECTRICAL CURRENT IS EITHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE – OUR VERY EXISTENCE IS THE RESULT OF HUMANS BEING MALE AND FEMALE. IT'S YIN AND YANG.
I DISAGREE. DUALITY IS AN INVENTION THAT SEEMS TO BE TRUE, BUT ONLY BECAUSE THE EXAMPLES YOU CITE SHARE SUPERFICIAL SIMILARITIES THAT APPEAR TO BE DUALISTIC BECAUSE WE DEFINE THEM IN THAT WAY.
AH! BUT IT'S ONE OR THE OTHER, RIGHT?
(SIGH) I'LL GIVE YOU THIS: THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD – THOSE WHO BREAK THINGS INTO TWO KINDS AND THOSE WHO DON'T.

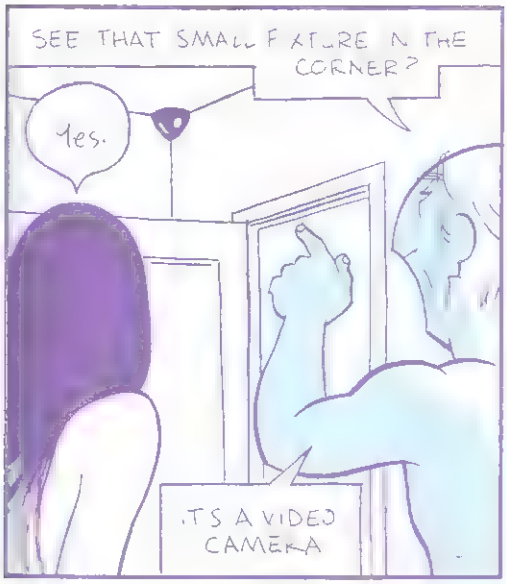

OF COURSE
REALIZE THAT THINGS
AREN'T SO BLACK AND WHITE—
—THAT IN ACTUALITY
POSSIBILITIES EXIST
ALONG A CONTINUUM
BETWEEN THE EXTREMES.

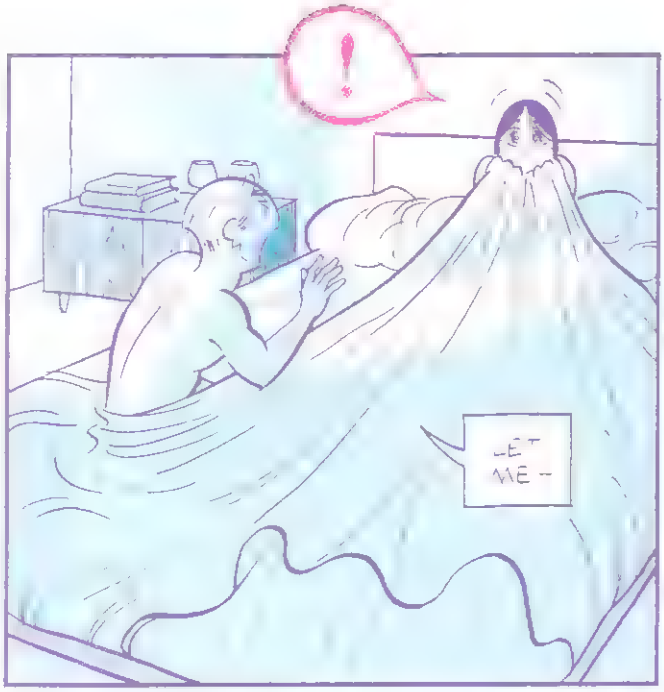

BUT WHY MUST CHOICES ALWAYS LIE ALONG A LINEAR SPECTRUM, WITH TWO POLES INSTEAD OF SAY
A SPHERE OF POSSIBILITIES
IT'S JUST A CONVENIENT ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE.
BY CHOOSING TWO ASPECTS OF A SUBJECT THAT APPEAR TO BE IN OPPOSITION, EACH CAN BE EXAMINED IN LIGHT OF THE OTHER IN ORDER TO BETTER ILLUMINATE THE ENTIRE SUBJECT.
AS LONG AS ONE DOESN'T MISTAKE THE SYSTEM FOR REALITY.
EXACTLY.

IN LITERATURE, ONE CAN FIND SIMILAR EXAMPLES OF DELIBERATE EXAGGERATION.
HERMANN HESSE'S *NARCISSUS AND GOLDMUND*, FOR INSTANCE, EXPLORES HUMAN NATURE BY CONTRASTING THE LIFE OF A HEDONIST WITH THAT OF AN ASCETIC.
IN *THE CLOVEN VISCOUNT* ITALO CALVINO BISECTS HIS CHARACTER INTO A "KIND" HALF AND A "CRUEL" HALF TO SHOW THE GOOD OR ILL EFFECTS EACH QUALITY CAN PRODUCE UNCHECKED.
SOME MIGHT ARGUE THAT SUCH SIMPLIFICATION IS BEST SUITED TO CHILDREN'S STORIES, OR COMIC BOOKS.
CLIK
THAT'S ENTIRELY DIFFERENT.

WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, MAYBE ASTERIOS' PARTICULAR VISION HAS A MORE SPECIFIC SOURCE.



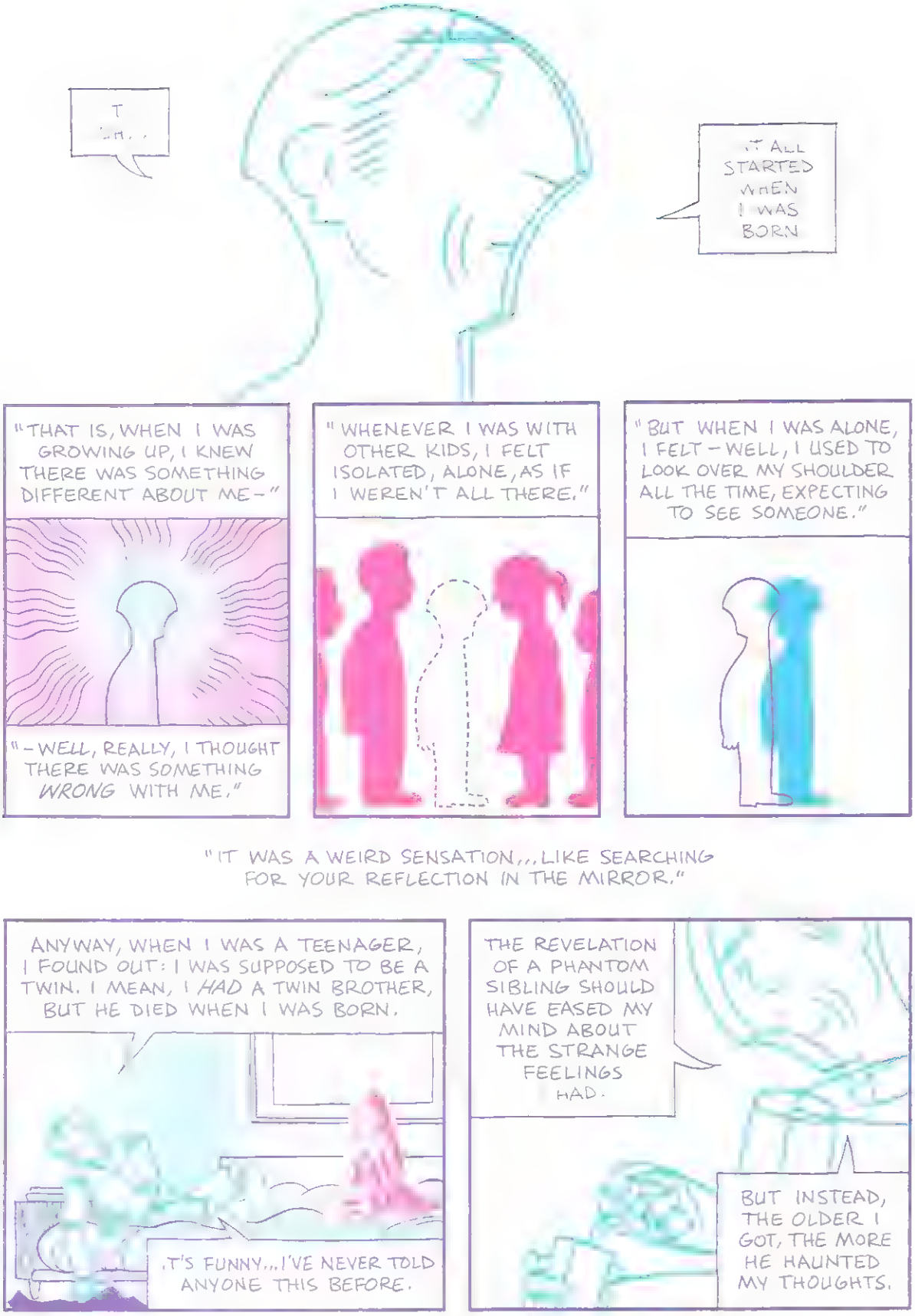

SEE THAT SMALL FEATURE IN THE CORNER?
Yes.
IT'S A VIDEO CAMERA


!
LET ME –

SLAP

You put a video camera in your bedroom?
ACTUALLY, THERE'S ONE IN EVERY ROOM.

WAIT – LET ME EXPLAIN.


T
IT ALL STARTED WHEN I WAS BORN
"THAT IS, WHEN I WAS GROWING UP, I KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT ME–"
"–WELL, REALLY, I THOUGHT THERE WAS SOMETHING *WRONG* WITH ME."
"WHENEVER I WAS WITH OTHER KIDS, I FELT ISOLATED, ALONE, AS IF I WEREN'T ALL THERE."
"BUT WHEN I WAS ALONE, I FELT – WELL, I USED TO LOOK OVER MY SHOULDER ALL THE TIME, EXPECTING TO SEE SOMEONE."
"IT WAS A WEIRD SENSATION... LIKE SEARCHING FOR YOUR REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR."
ANYWAY, WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER, I FOUND OUT: I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A TWIN. I MEAN, I *HAD* A TWIN BROTHER, BUT HE DIED WHEN I WAS BORN.
IT'S FUNNY... I'VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE THIS BEFORE.
THE REVELATION OF A PHANTOM SIBLING SHOULD HAVE EASED MY MIND ABOUT THE STRANGE FEELINGS I HAD.
BUT INSTEAD, THE OLDER I GOT, THE MORE HE HAUNTED MY THOUGHTS.

"EACH OF US HAD HAD AN EQUAL CHANCE INSIDE THE WOMB."

"WHY WAS I THE ONE TO MAKE IT OUT ALIVE?"

"WAS IT JUST MUTE LUCK? OR SOME DOCTOR'S MISTAKE?"

OR HAD I SOMEHOW SUFFOCATED THE POOR BASTARD?

CLIK

WE WERE IDENTICAL TWINS – WHO, IT TURNS OUT, MAKE FASCINATING CASE STUDIES, BECAUSE THEY OFTEN LIVE REMARKABLY SIMILAR LIVES.

"EVEN WHEN SEPARATED AT BIRTH, AND RAISED IN DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES, THEY TEND TO CHOOSE THE SAME PROFESSION, GET MARRIED AT THE SAME AGE, HAVE THE SAME NUMBER OF CHILDREN..."

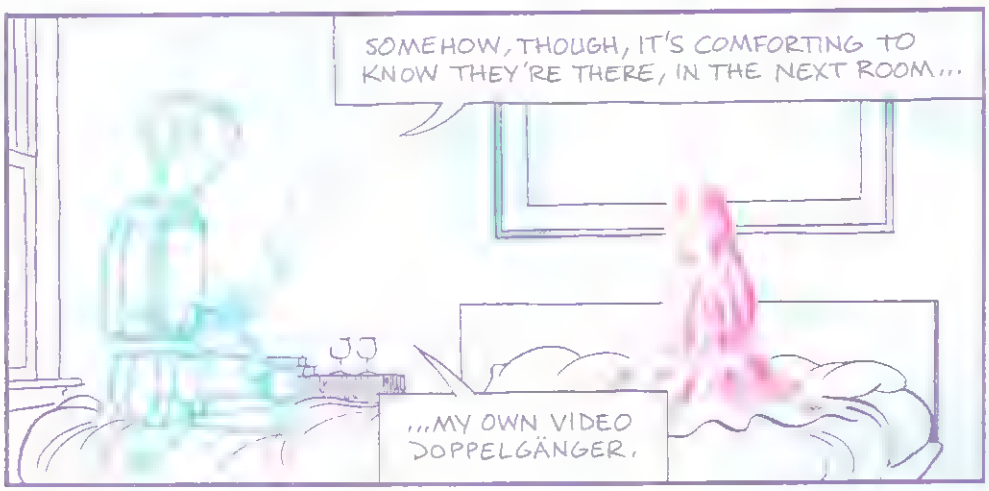
WHAT IF IT HAD BEEN THE OTHER WAY AROUND? I WONDERED.

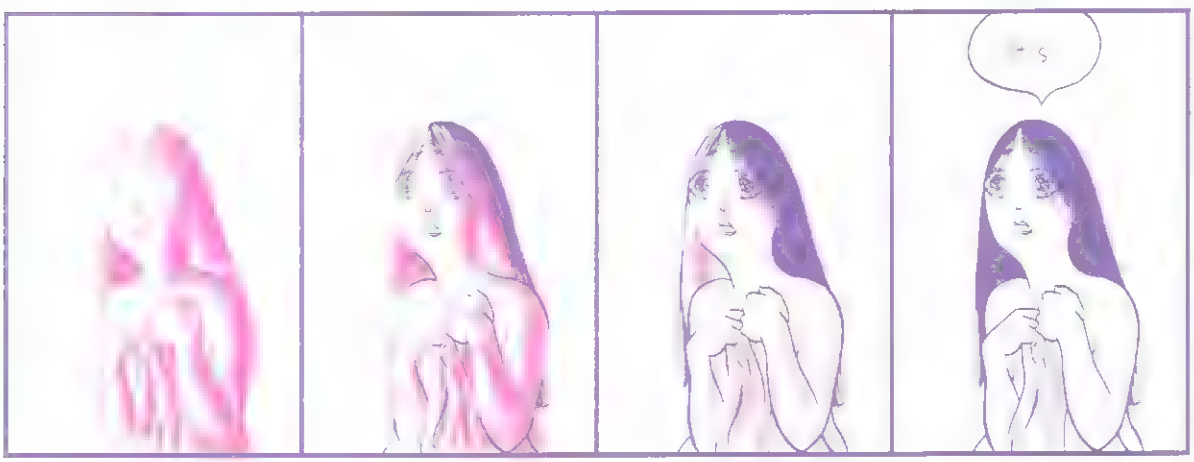
IF HE HAD BEEN THE ONE TO SURVIVE, WOULD HIS LIFE HAVE FOLLOWED EXACTLY THE PATH MINE HAS?

AM I LIVING HIS LIFE NOW?

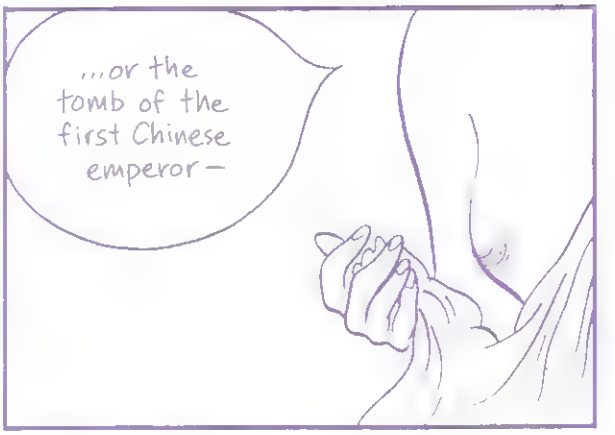
SO, A FEW YEARS AGO, I HAD THESE CAMERAS PUT IN. THEY RECORD EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON HERE, TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY.
I HAVE THEM UP IN ITHACA, TOO.

IT'S NOT LIKE I EVER WATCH THE TAPES - I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE MINUTE OF THEM.
IN FACT, I CAN'T IMAGINE EVER WANTING TO WATCH THEM.


SOMEHOW, THOUGH, IT'S COMFORTING TO KNOW THEY'RE THERE, IN THE NEXT ROOM...
...MY OWN VIDEO DOPPELGÄNGER.

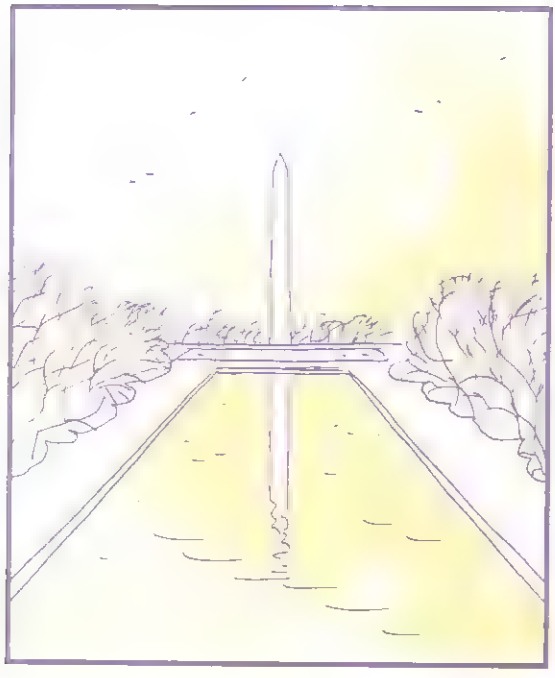


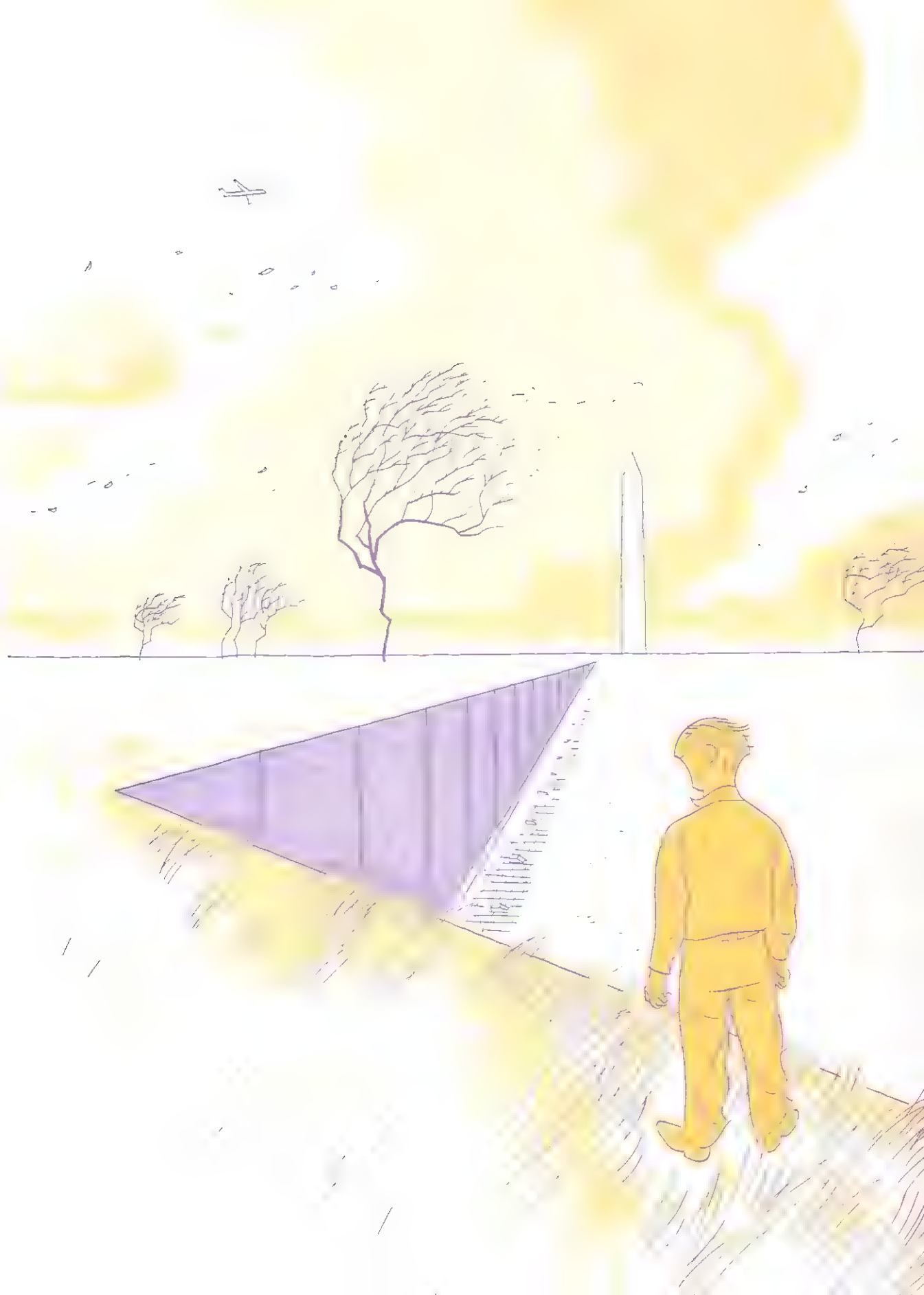
. t's
ke..
. the
Egyptian
Tombs.

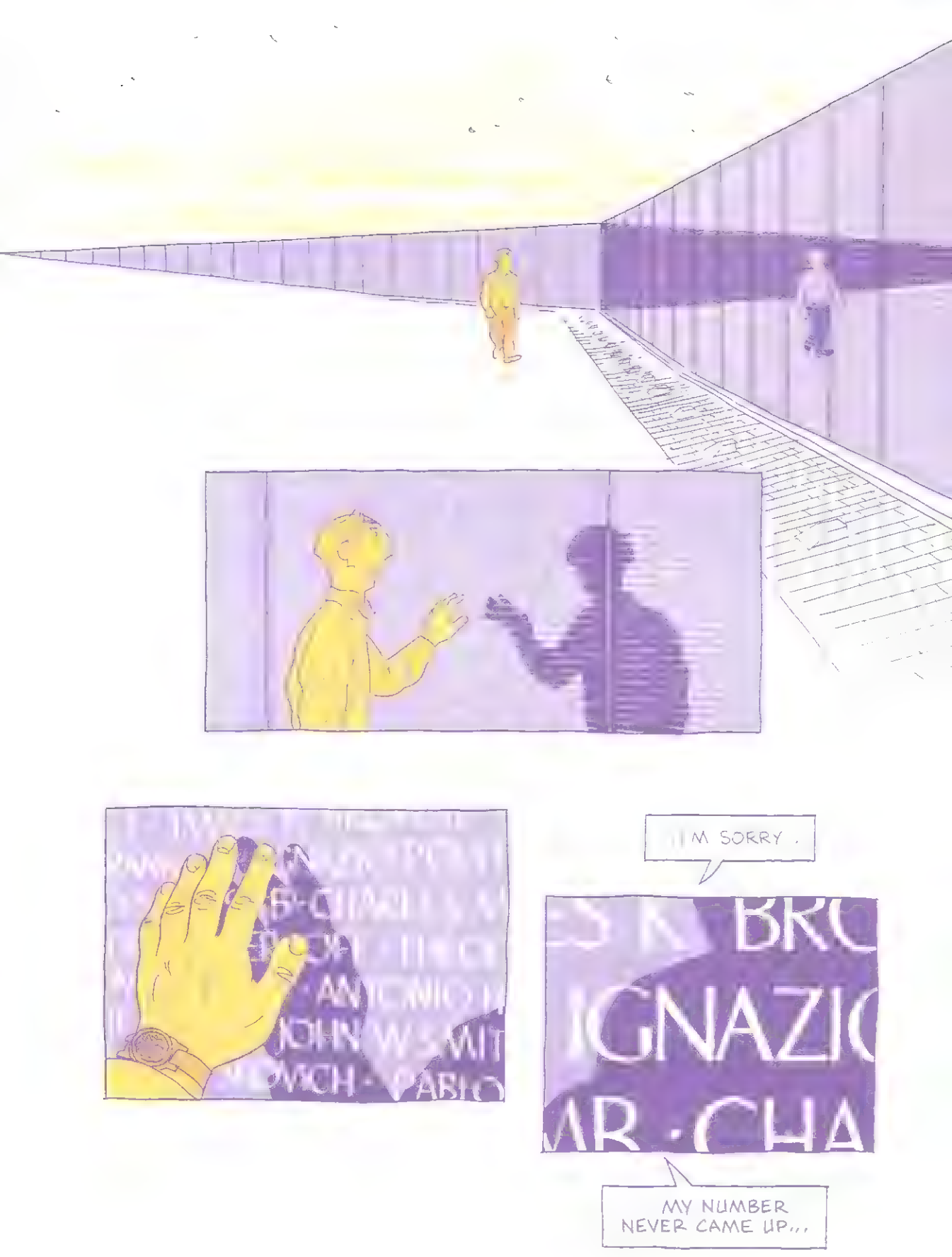

...or the
tomb of the
first Chinese
emperor—

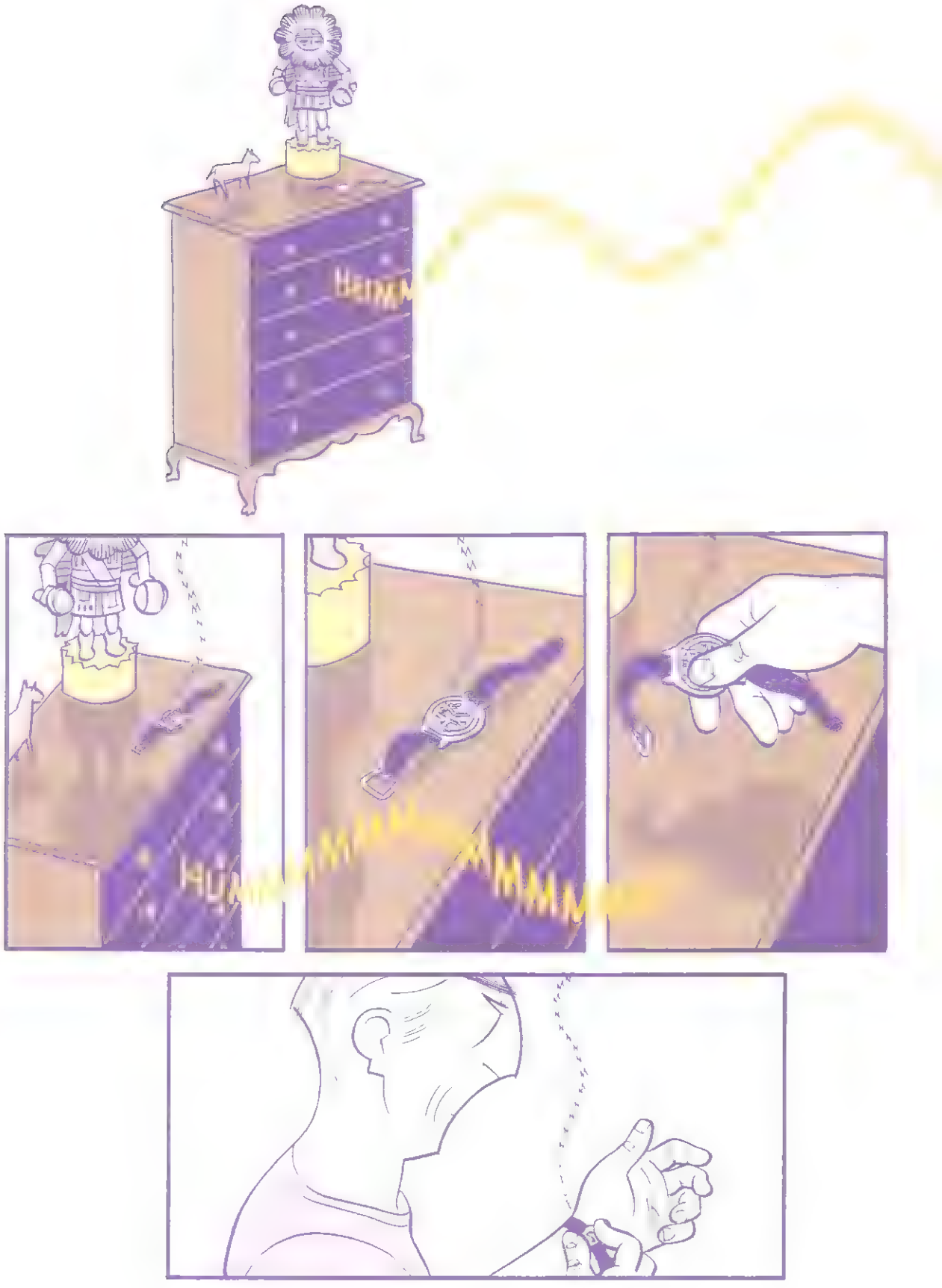
— all those clay soldiers
lined up in rows

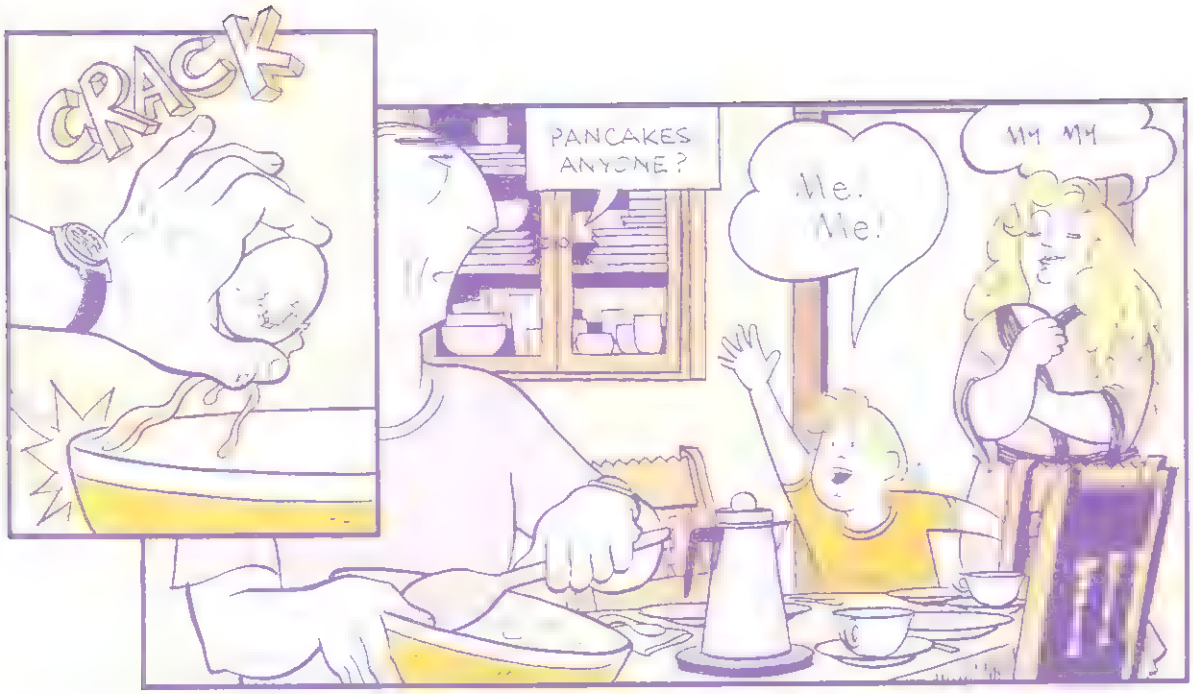
...like a
shadow of the
living world.





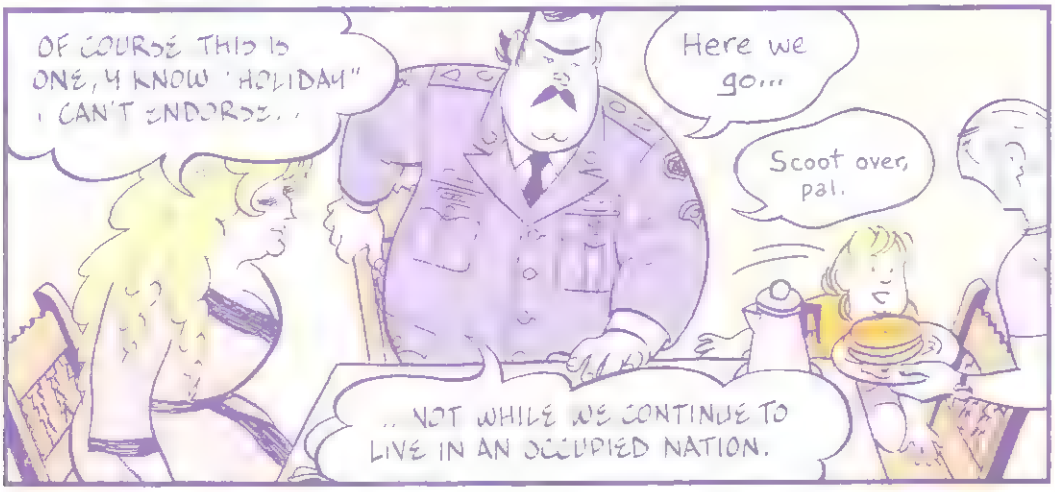

I'M SORRY .
MY NUMBER NEVER CAME UP...

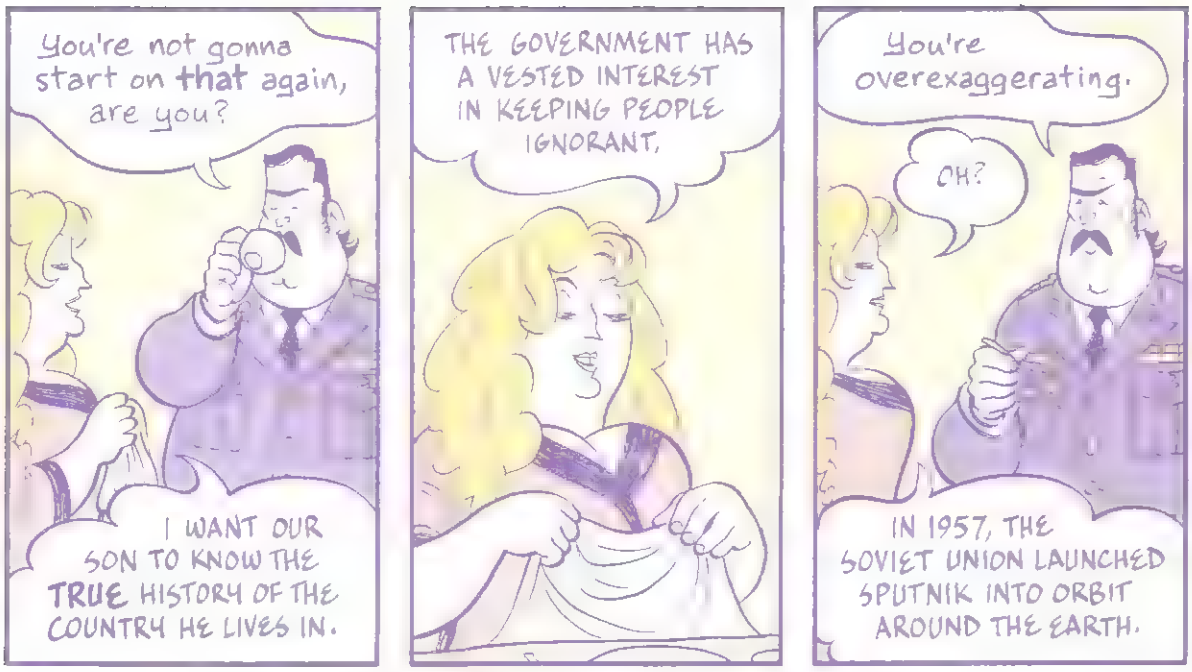



CRACK
PANCAKES ANYONE?
Me. Me!
MM MM

...WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE.
IT'S A HOLIDAY. YOU DESERVE A DAY OFF.

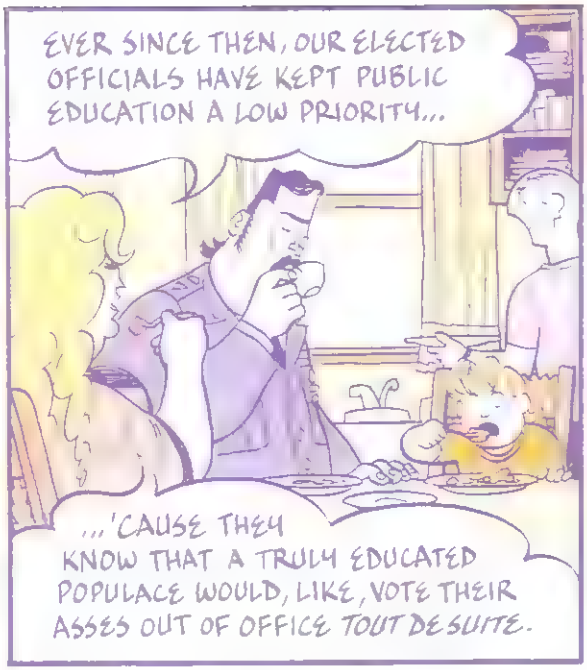
HEAR THAT STIFFLY?
Hmm

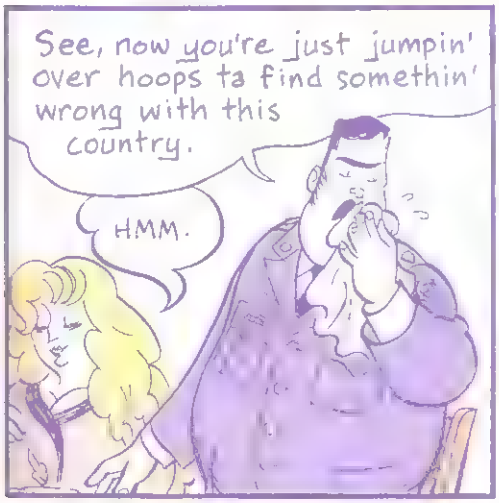

OF COURSE THIS IS ONE, I KNOW "HOLIDAY" I CAN'T ENDORSE...
Here we go...
Scoot over, pal.
...NOT WHILE WE CONTINUE TO LIVE IN AN OCCUPIED NATION.



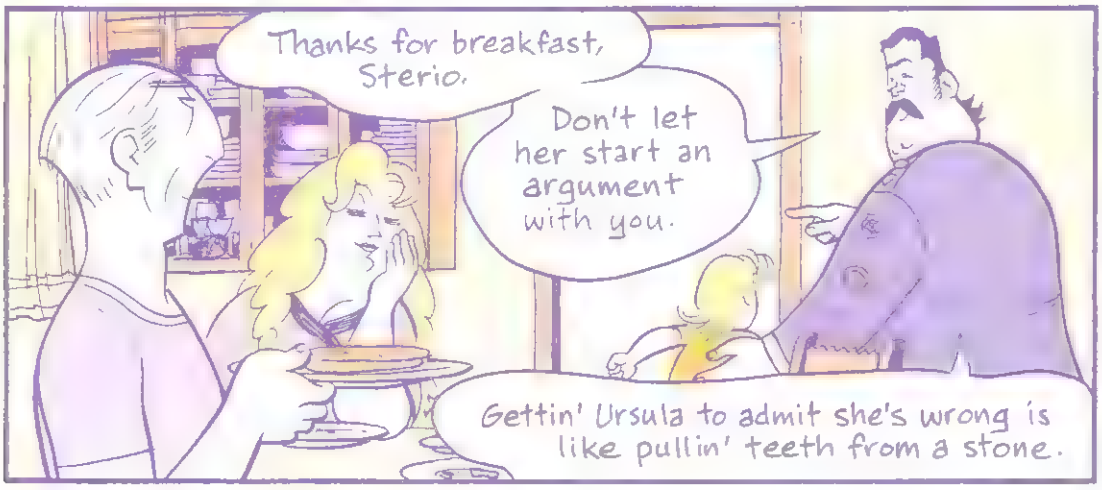
AMERICA WAS, LIKE, SO WIGGED-OUT BY THIS UNPRECEDENTED DISPLAY OF TECHNOLOGICAL PROWESS THAT THE GOVERNMENT BOOSTED PUBLIC EDUCATION SPENDING – WITH THE SOLE PURPOSE OF PRODUCING A GENERATION OF ROCKET SCIENTISTS WHO COULD, Y'KNOW, OUT-BLASTOFF THE REDS.

SO WHAT HAPPENED? BY THE LATE SIXTIES ALL THOSE STUDENTS WERE IN COLLEGE — AND WERE SMART ENOUGH TO START QUESTIONING THE COUNTRY'S POLICIES — TO PROTEST AGAINST, Y'KNOW, THE WAR AND EVERY-THING.

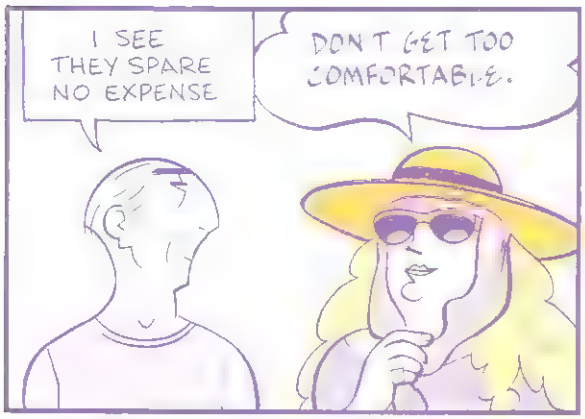

EVER SINCE THEN, OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS HAVE KEPT PUBLIC EDUCATION A LOW PRIORITY...
...'CAUSE THEY KNOW THAT A TRULY EDUCATED POPULACE WOULD, LIKE, VOTE THEIR ASSES OUT OF OFFICE TOUT DE SUITE.


See, now you're just jumpin' over hoops ta find somethin' wrong with this country.
HMM.

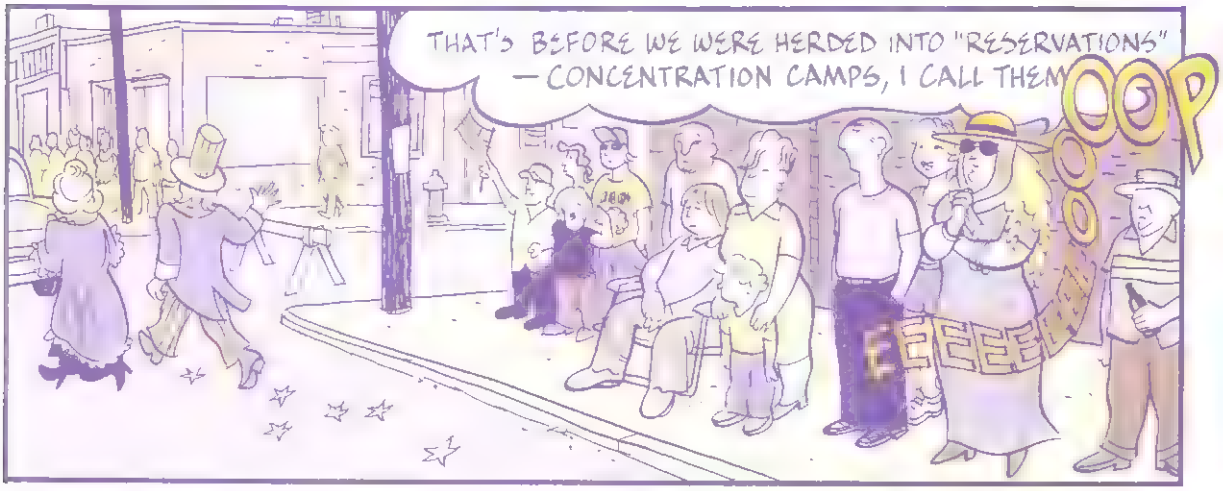
I gotta get movin'
You comin', Jackson?
Can Ronny Doug come, too?
Sure thing, buddy.

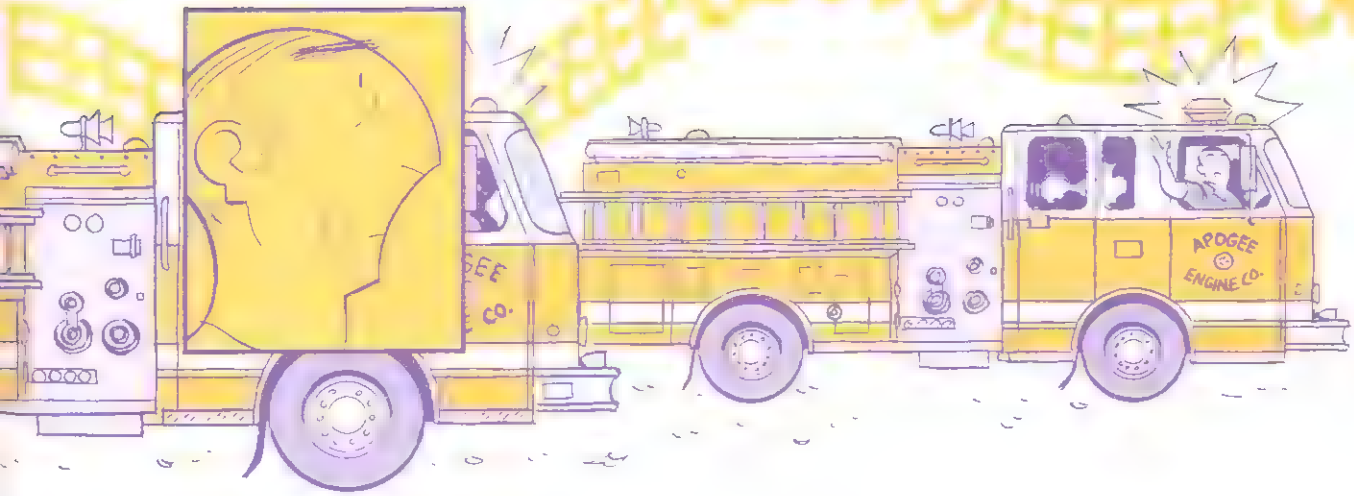

Thanks for breakfast, Sterio.
Don't let her start an argument with you.
Gettin' Ursula to admit she's wrong is like pullin' teeth from a stone.

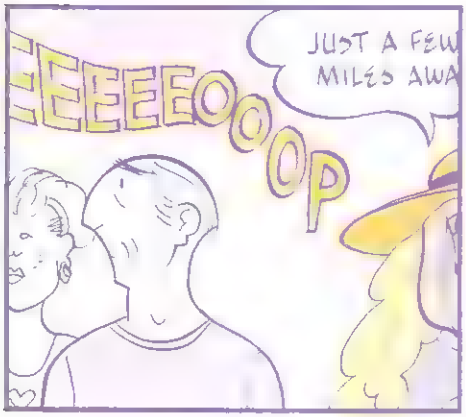
HONK HONK
BEEEEEP
INDEPENDENCE DAY
2000

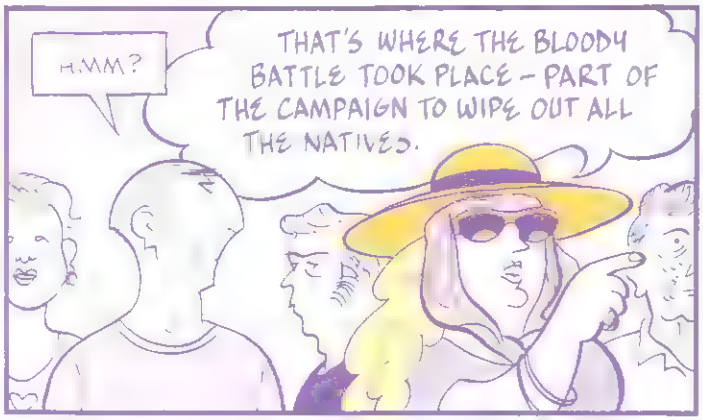

I SEE THEY SPARE NO EXPENSE
DON'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE.

Y'KNOW ONCE ALL THIS LAND WAS WILD, AND INHABITED BY A TRULY FREE PEOPLE.

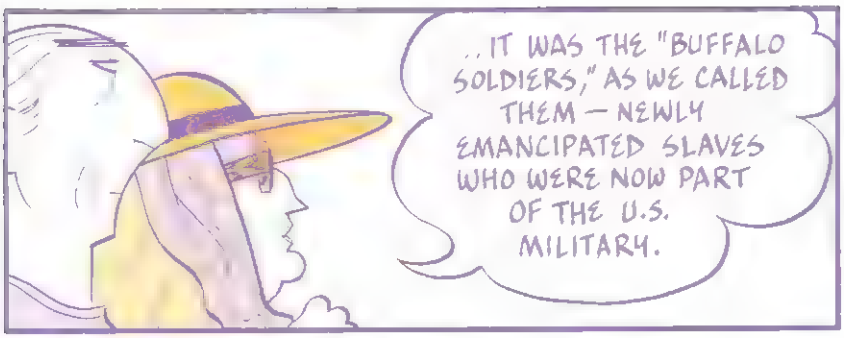

THAT'S BEFORE WE WERE HERDED INTO "RESERVATIONS" — CONCENTRATION CAMPS, I CALL THEM
OOP

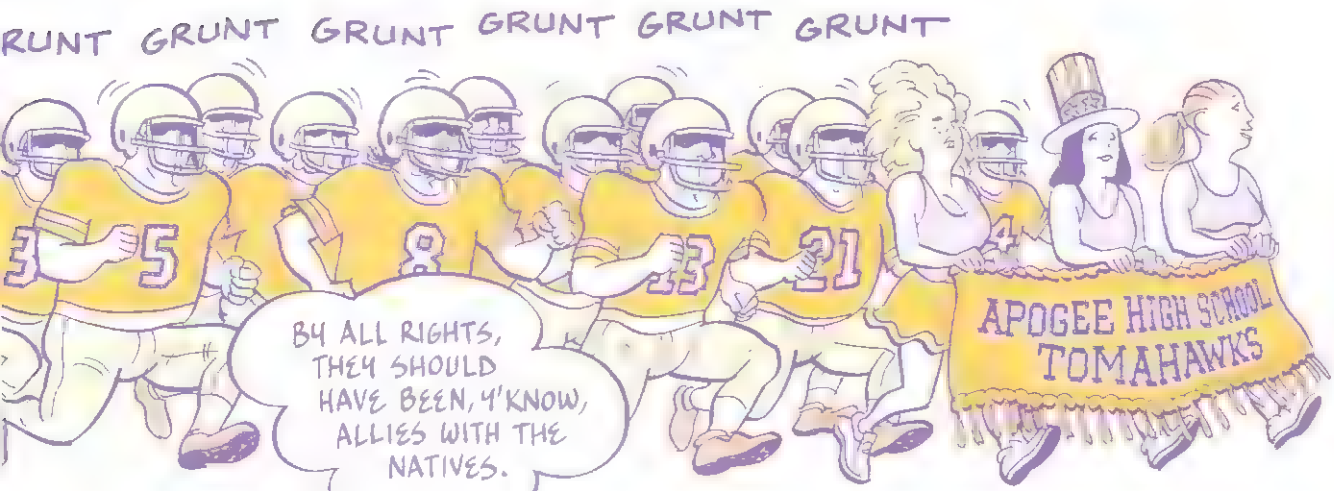

APOGEE ENGINE CO.


JUST A FEW MILES AWA
EEEEEOOOOP


HMM?
THAT'S WHERE THE BLOODY BATTLE TOOK PLACE – PART OF THE CAMPAIGN TO WIPE OUT ALL THE NATIVES.

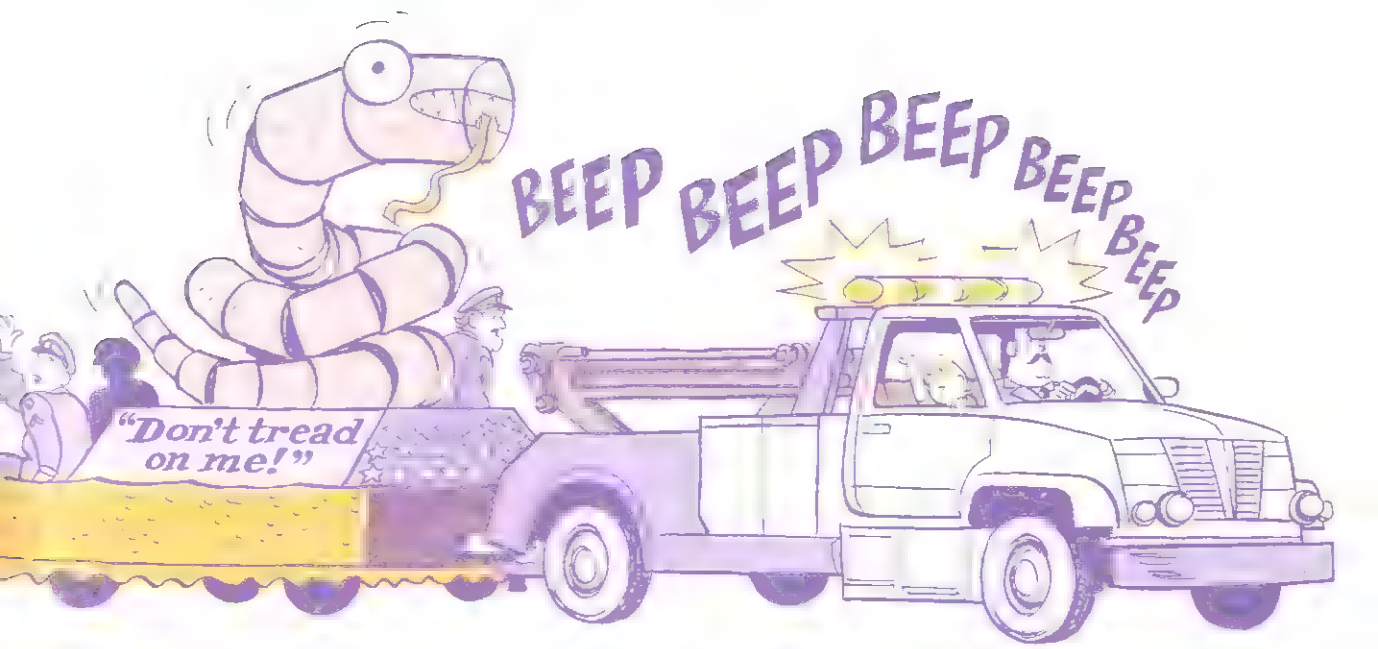
THE IRONY OF IT IS THAT IT WASN'T THE WHITE EUROPEAN OCCUPIERS WHO DID THE DIRTY WORK...


..IT WAS THE "BUFFALO SOLDIERS," AS WE CALLED THEM — NEWLY EMANCIPATED SLAVES WHO WERE NOW PART OF THE U.S. MILITARY.


RUNT GRUNT GRUNT GRUNT GRUNT GRUNT
APOGEE HIGH SCHOOL TOMAHAWKS
BY ALL RIGHTS, THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN, Y'KNOW, ALLIES WITH THE NATIVES.

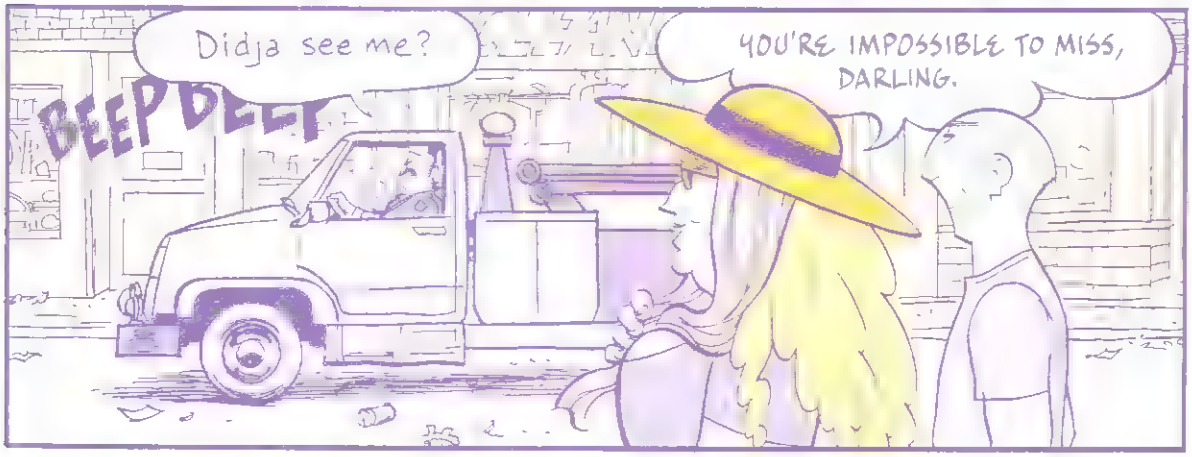
BUT INSTEAD, TO EARN THE RESPECT OF THEIR FORMER MASTERS, THEY BECAME THE TOUGHEST, MOST PROFESSIONAL FIGHTERS IN THE ARMY.

THERE'S MY BABY!
BEEP BEE

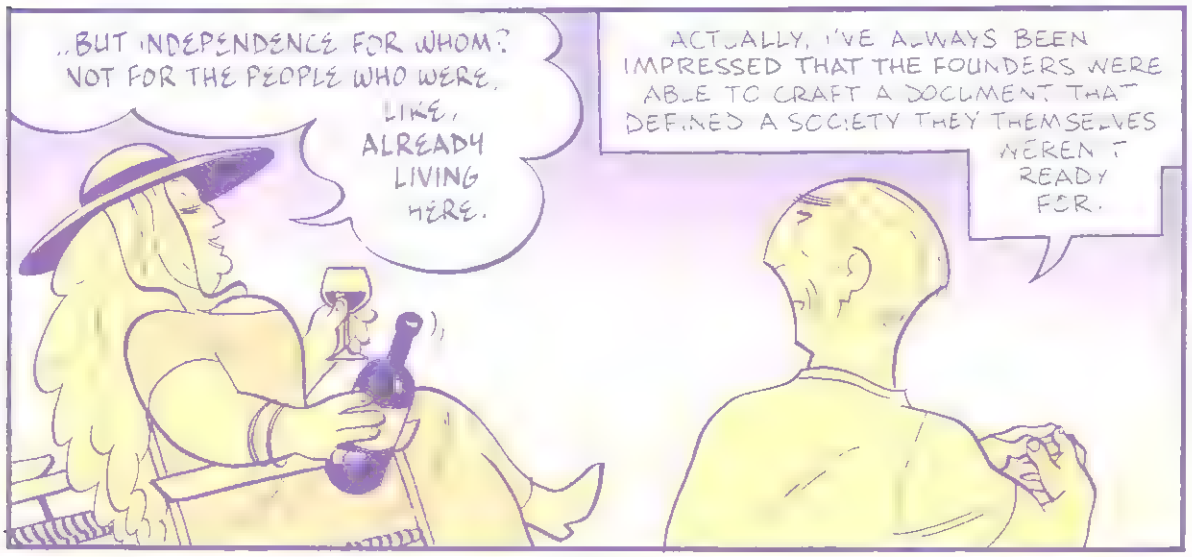

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP
"Don't tread on me!"

ALL IT EARNED THEM, OF COURSE, WAS RESENTMENT, PREJUDICE, AND MOST LIKELY A BULLET IN THE BACK.

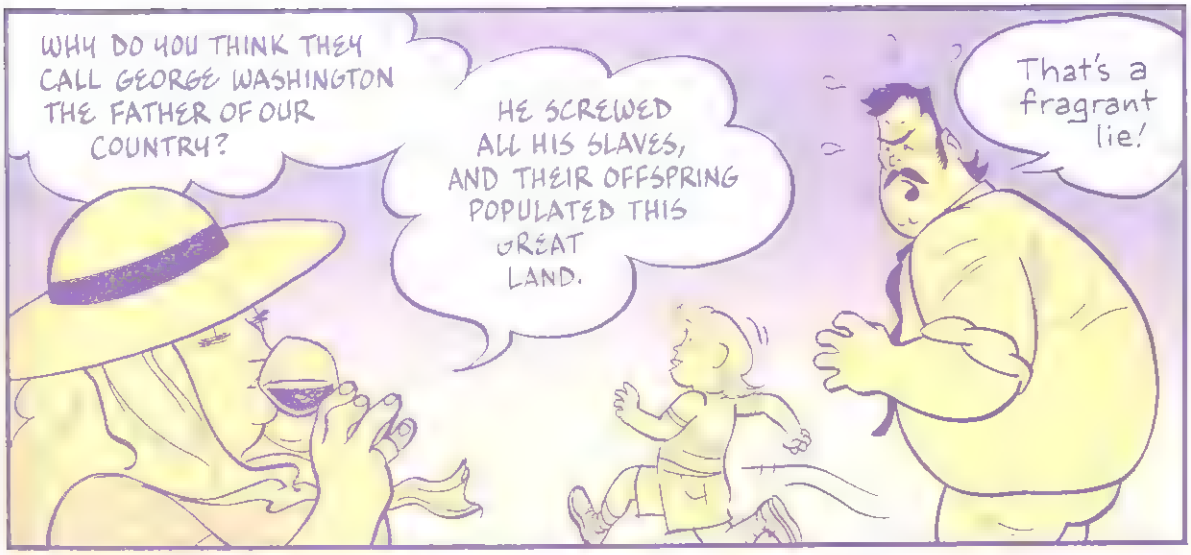
AL'S MEATS
Upholster
IT'S OVER?
IT'S OVER.


Didja see me?
YOU'RE IMPOSSIBLE TO MISS, DARLING.
BEEP BEEP

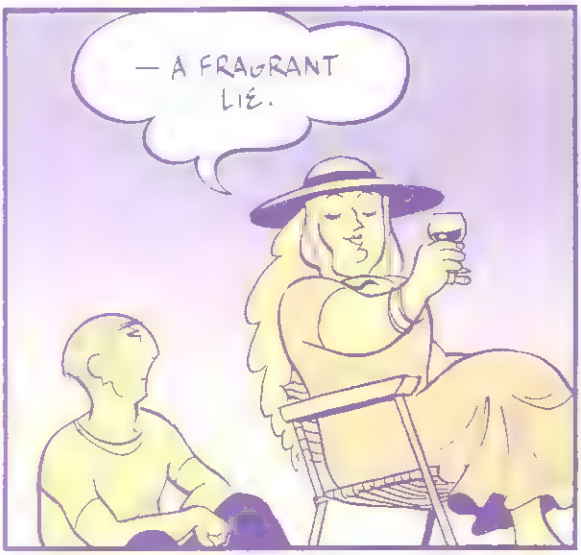
...AND SO ENDS ANOTHER DAY IN CELEBRATION OF HARD-WON INDEPENDENCE...
Okay, Ursula...


..BUT INDEPENDENCE FOR WHOM? NOT FOR THE PEOPLE WHO WERE, LIKE, ALREADY LIVING HERE.
ACTUALLY, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN IMPRESSED THAT THE FOUNDERS WERE ABLE TO CRAFT A DOCUMENT THAT DEFINED A SOCIETY THEY THEMSELVES WEREN'T READY FOR.

YES, HERE'S TO THE FOUNDING FATHERS —
— SLAVE-OWNERS, BRITISH CITIZENS WHO DIDN'T WANT TO PAY TAXES...
O-kay, Ursula...


WHY DO YOU THINK THEY CALL GEORGE WASHINGTON THE FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY?
HE SCREWED ALL HIS SLAVES, AND THEIR OFFSPRING POPULATED THIS GREAT LAND.
That's a fragrant lie!

JUST LIKE THIS FRAGILE EXISTENCE, MY DEAR—


— A FRAGRANT LIE.

BOOM

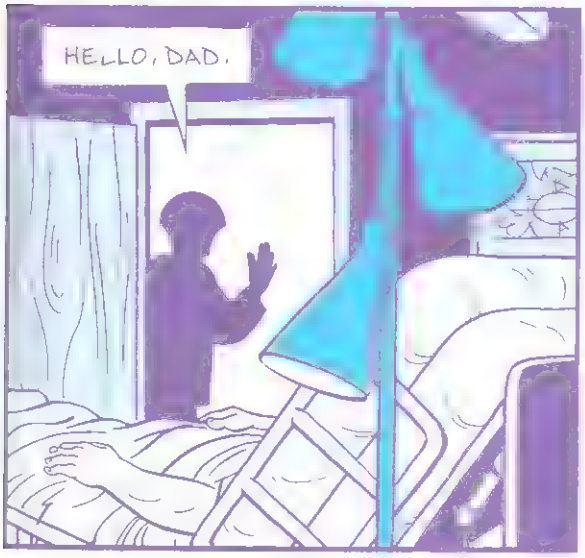
OUR FATHER, EUGENIOS (THE DOCTOR), THOUGHT LITTLE ABOUT RELIGION.

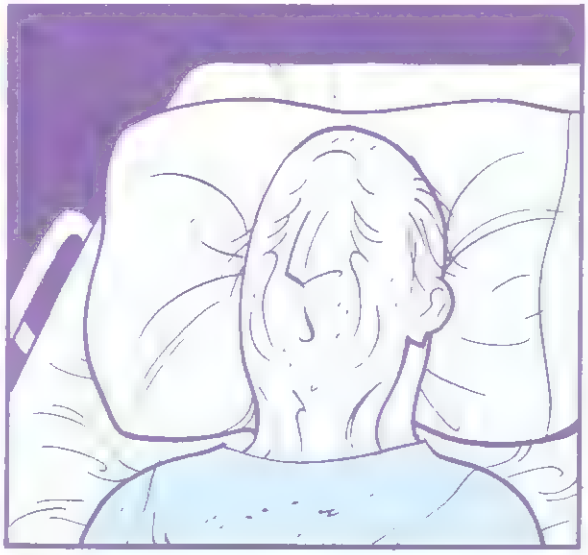
I had this strange dream last night.
..ggghhg..
eeeeeeeee
STOP MAKING SO MUCH NOISE. SOMEONE WILL HEAR YOU.

OUR MOTHER, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD BEEN A PRACTICING CATHOLIC.

Come in and get warm.

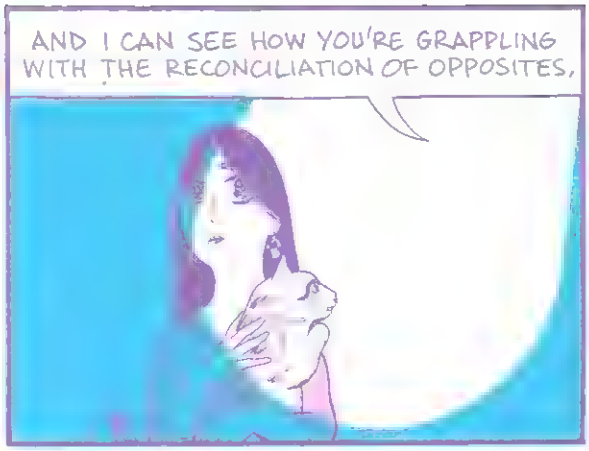
I was just about to feed your father.

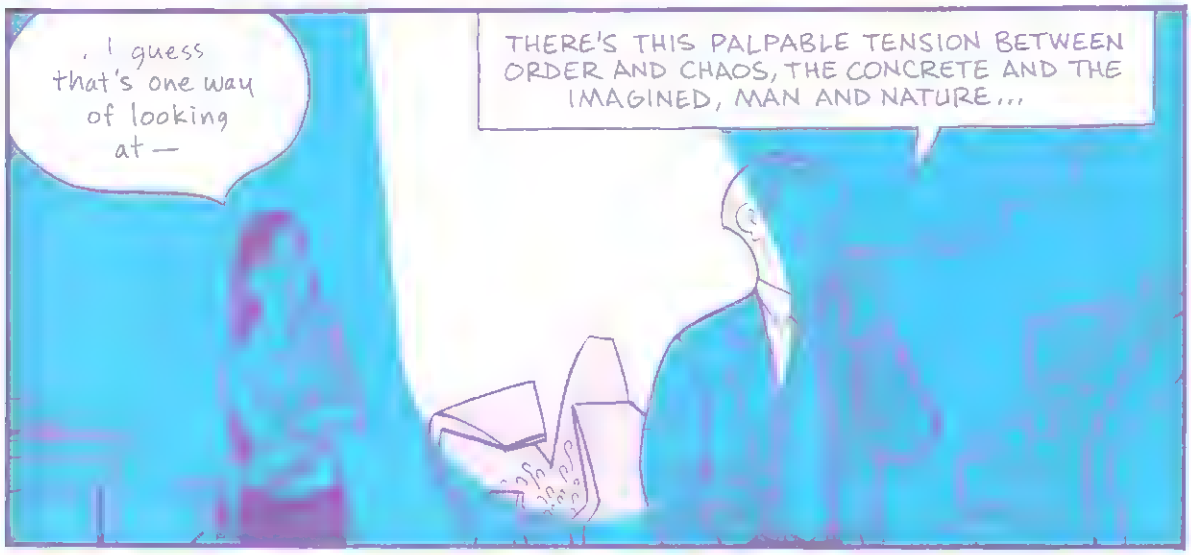


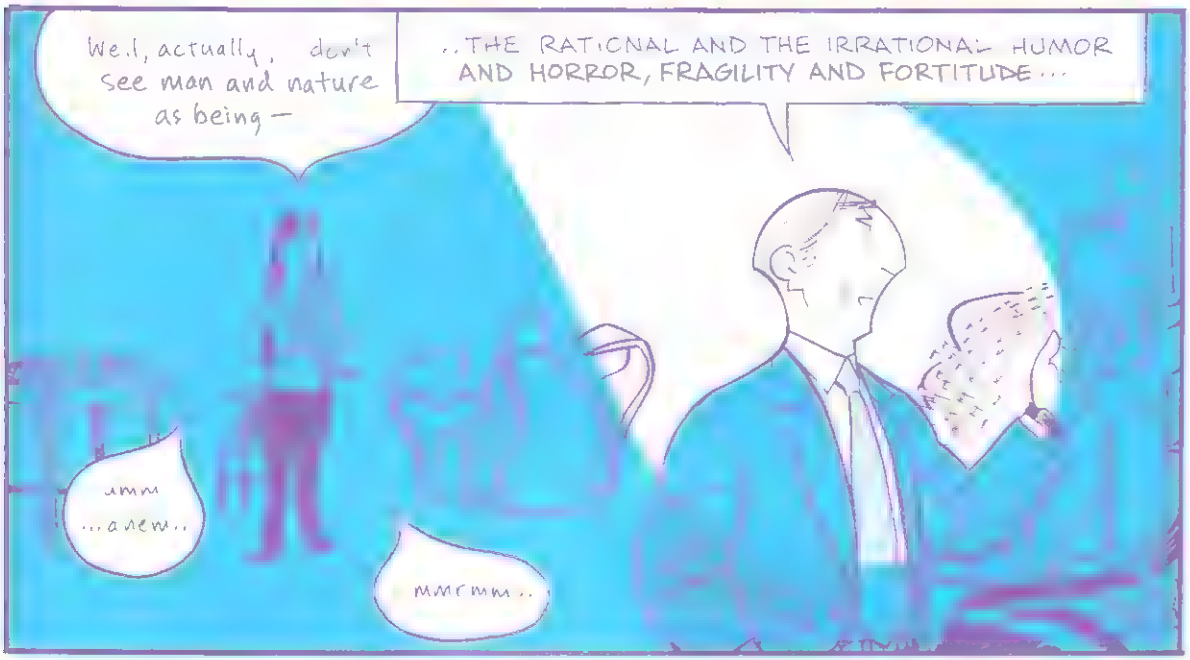


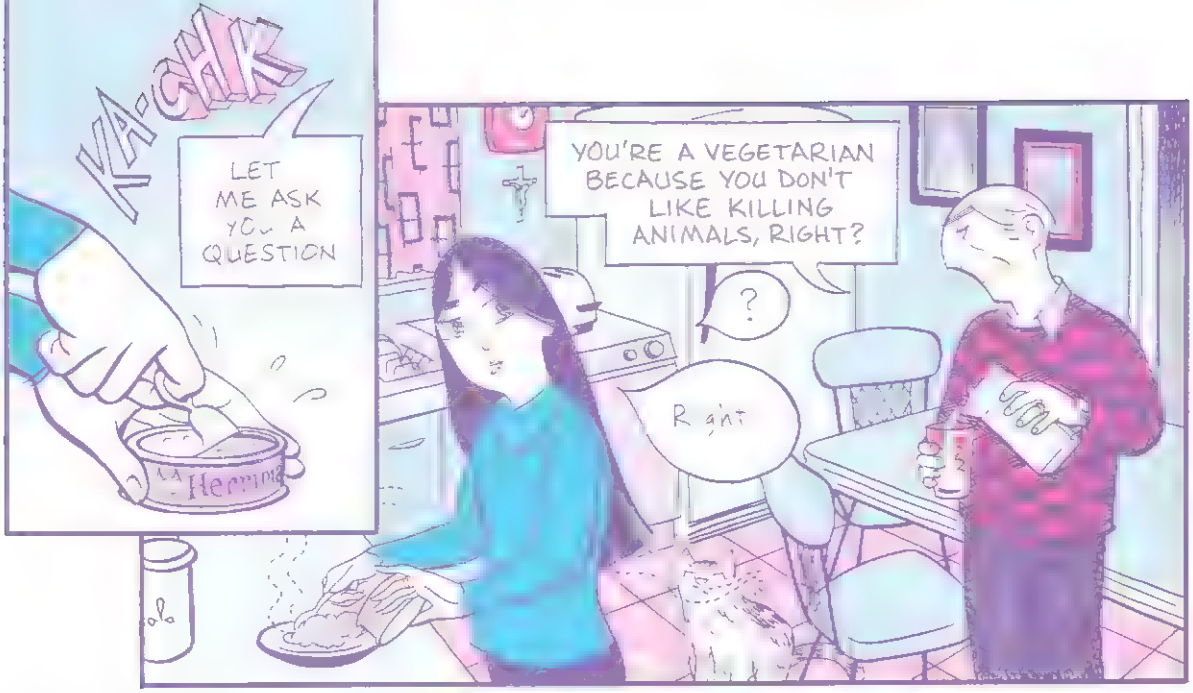
HANA'S UPBRINGING WAS UNDERSTANDABLY MORE COMPLEX.
I was raised a Buddhist, but I've always had a soft spot for Francis of Assisi.
ASTERIOS FIRST SAW HER SCULPTURE IN A STUDIO SHE HAD SET UP ON CAMPUS.
THAT MAKES SENSE
Um... everything here was made from found materials.
THESE ARE REALLY STRONG.

Thank you


AND I CAN SEE HOW YOU'RE GRAPPLING WITH THE RECONCILIATION OF OPPOSITES,


. I guess that's one way of looking at —
THERE'S THIS PALPABLE TENSION BETWEEN ORDER AND CHAOS, THE CONCRETE AND THE IMAGINED, MAN AND NATURE...

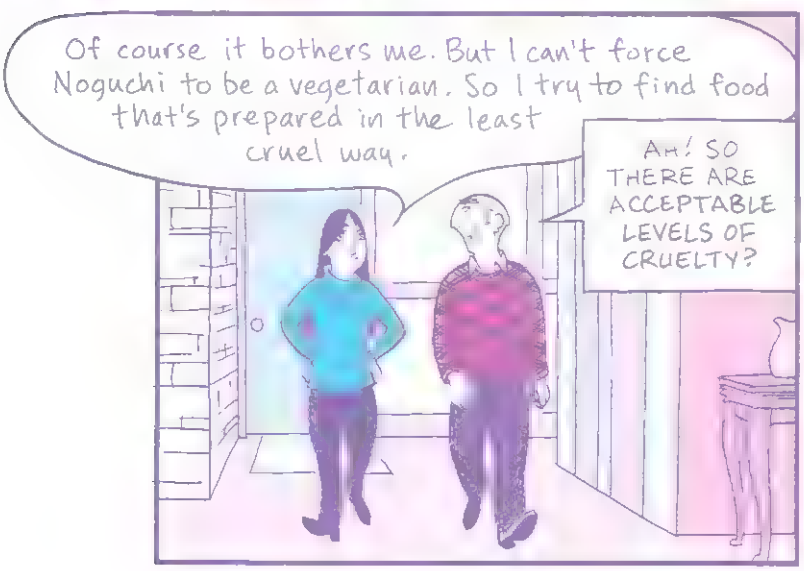

We.l, actually, don't see man and nature as being —
..THE RATICNAL AND THE IRRATIONAL HUMOR AND HORROR, FRAGILITY AND FORTITUDE...
umm ...anem..
mmrmm..


KA-CHK
LET ME ASK YOU A QUESTION
Herring
YOU'RE A VEGETARIAN BECAUSE YOU DON'T LIKE KILLING ANIMALS, RIGHT?
?
Right

BUT YOU FEED DEAD MEAT TO YOUR CAT.

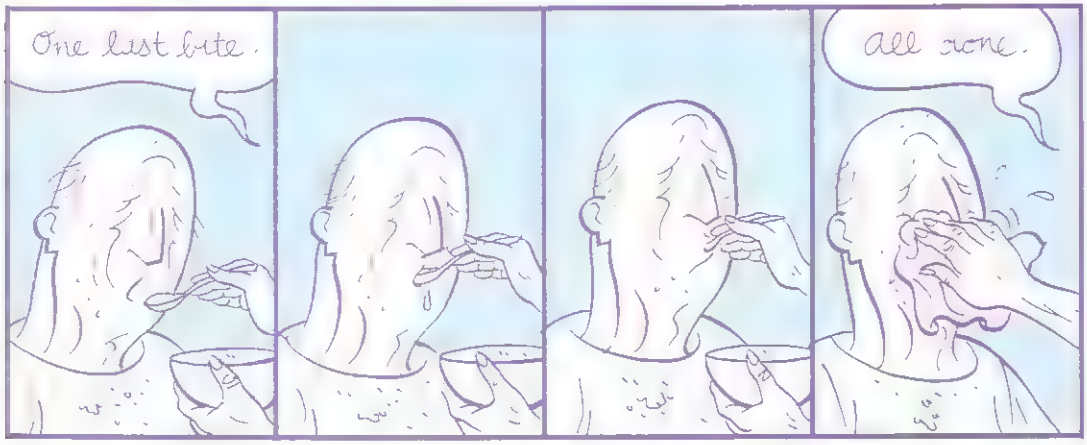
Ahhh... ?

DON'T YOU SEE SOME KIND OF CONTRADICTION?
I can choose what I eat. Cats are natural carnivores.
DOESN'T IT BOTHER YOU?


Of course it bothers me. But I can't force Noguchi to be a vegetarian. So I try to find food that's prepared in the least cruel way.
AH! SO THERE ARE ACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF CRUELTY?

I married you, didn't I?

trats good..


One last bite.
all done.

Is there any change?
No. There's never any change.

it must be very stressful
Life is stressful, dear. That's why they say "rest in peace"

I'll never forget the day Gene had his stroke. Asterios was in school, and I was here at the sink when the phone rang—

YES, YOU'VE TOLD US THIS MOM.

SEVERAL TIMES.

Well, I'm sorry I don't have any new stories. As you can see, I don't get out much.

But I'm not complaining..

[illegible] it happened I used to pray every day. Just keep my Gene alive. I was so sure he was going to die any minute, and I'd be left all alone.

But your father didn't die.

He stayed the same — can you imagine? — the same for years and years

It sounds terrible, but I started praying for God to **take** Gene — I thought. He's suffering, nobody should live like this.

But still, your father didn't die.

This is what my life turned into — feeding him and washing him and talking to him and never knowing if he understood...

To be honest, I was angry — but ashamed, too. God was keeping my husband alive and I was praying for him to be dead.

But now I know what God was trying to tell me. After all those years taking care of your father washing and feeding him while he was staring straight ahead

It was this: just because we don't hear the Lord, it doesn't mean He's stopped talking to us

ASTERIOS, OF COURSE, HAD A DIFFERENT THEORY.

WHAT I REALLY FIND AMUSING IS THAT THE HISTORY OF RELIGION IS BASICALLY THE STORY OF "HOLY MEN" WHO HEARD VOICES, SAW VISIONS, AND BELIEVED THEMSELVES PERSECUTED FOR THEIR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE DIVINE.
TODAY WE'D CALL THEM PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENICS.
Well... there must have been some truth in what they said, or they wouldn't have had so many followers.
HARD TO SAY –
– APART FROM BEING OVERLY CREDULOUS, THOSE FOLLOWERS HAVE HAD CENTURIES TO DISTORT THE ORIGINAL MESSAGE.
BESIDES, CRAZY PEOPLE CAN OFTEN BE VERY CHARISMATIC.
TAKE IT FROM ME, IF LITHIUM HAD BEEN AVAILABLE A FEW THOUSAND YEARS AGO, THE WORLD WOULD BE A VERY DIFFERENT PLACE.

ACCORDING TO HANA, THOUGH, ASTERICS PRACTICED HIS OWN RITUALS OF DEVOTION.

MONTHS BEFORE THEY WERE MARRIED, SHE MOVED MOST OF HER BELONGINGS INTO HIS APARTMENT.

FOR ME?

It's a tansu.

Kitchen

Books

It's the trunk my parents used to carry their things on the ship from Japan

Shoes +

IT'S BEAUTIFUL. THANK YOU.

Maybe it could go over there.

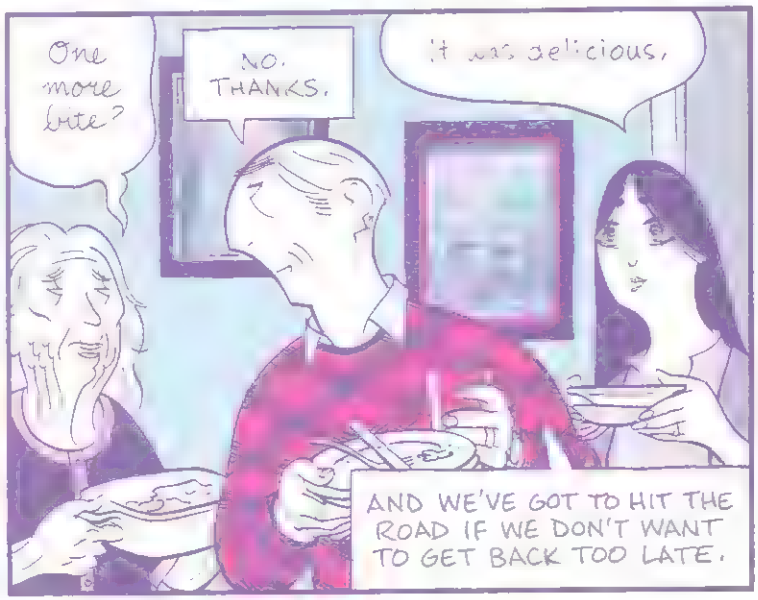
WAIT A MINUTE

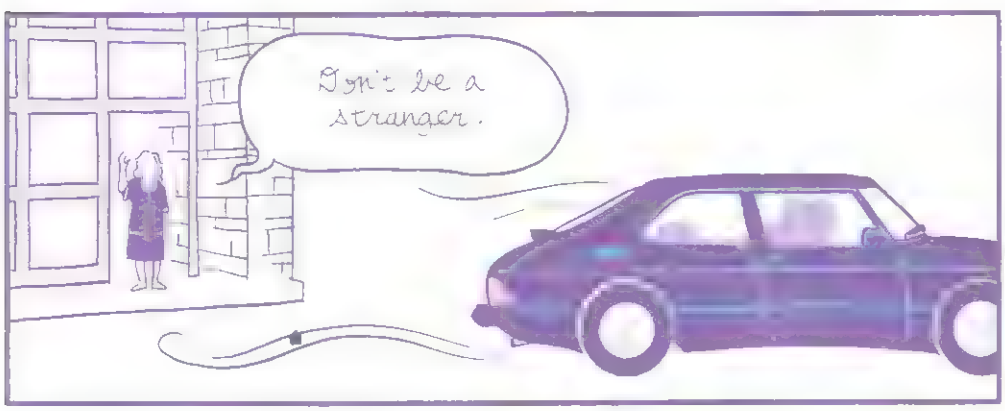
...WHAT'S THIS?

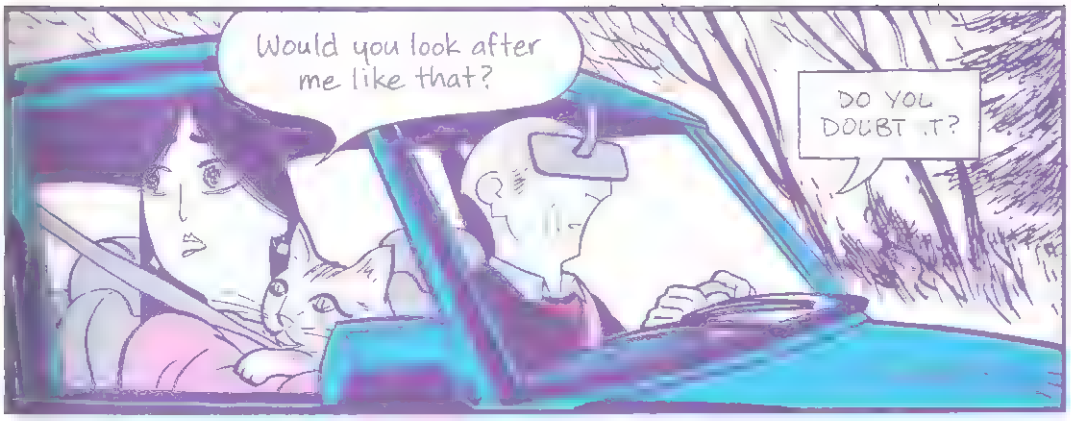
Oh – there are so many straight lines in here, I thought this would be a nice change.

BUT WHAT IS IT?
What do you mean?
I MEAN... IT'S JUST A... PSEUDO-SOMEBODY.
A pseu-?
I see. If it's a Mies van der Rohe, or a Prouvé, or an Eames, it's worthy of your nome, but if it's a pseudo-somebody...
WELL, THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH ROOM.
Oh, so it's a space issue. What if you had to leave suddenly and you could only take three things – what would they be?
I DON'T THINK IN TERMS OF THREE.
tum!
PLUCK
DAISY...
...HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT TO BET THAT THE GUY WHO INVENTED NUMBERS WAS SOMEONE WHO JUST WANTED TO COUNT HIS POSSESSIONS?

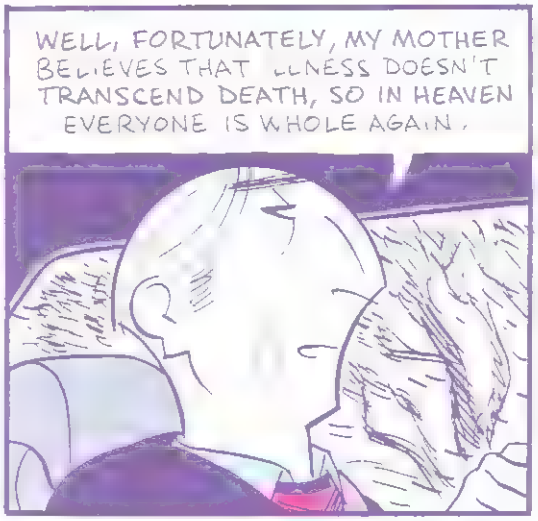
STILL, DESPITE HIS SKEPTICISM, ASTERIOS IS QUICK TO ADMIT THAT RELIGION ACCOUNTS FOR SOME OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WORKS OF ART IN MANKIND'S HISTORY.






Would you look after me like that?
DO YOU DOUBT IT?

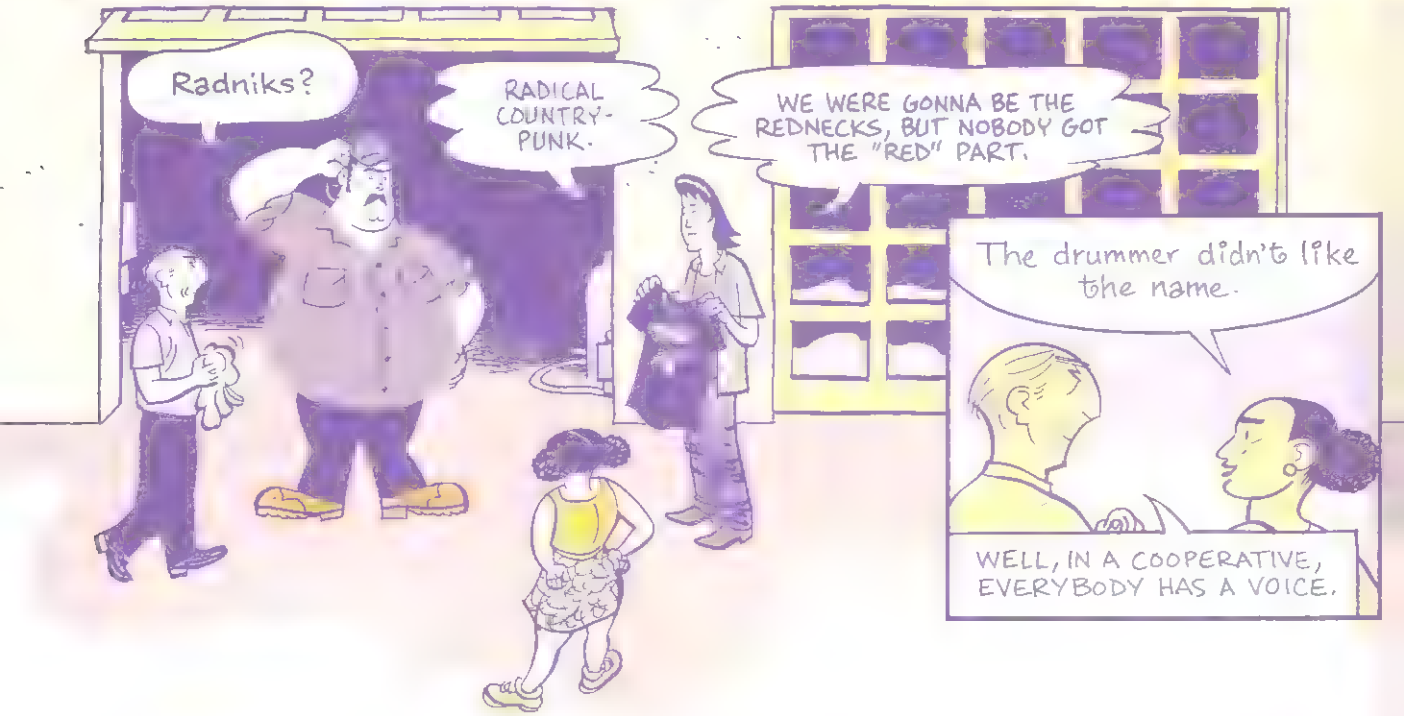
It would be hard not to get depressed.

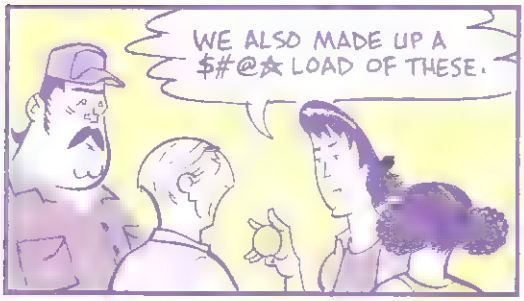

WELL, FORTUNATELY, MY MOTHER BELIEVES THAT ILLNESS DOESN'T TRANSCEND DEATH, SO IN HEAVEN EVERYONE IS WHOLE AGAIN.

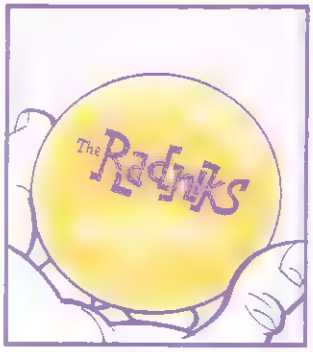
That's good! I'd hate the thought of spending all eternity with Alzheimer's and a colostomy bag.

The Radniks

MAJOR AUTO REPAIR

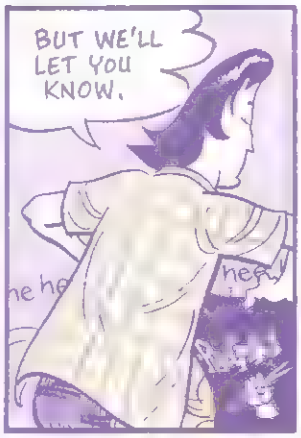




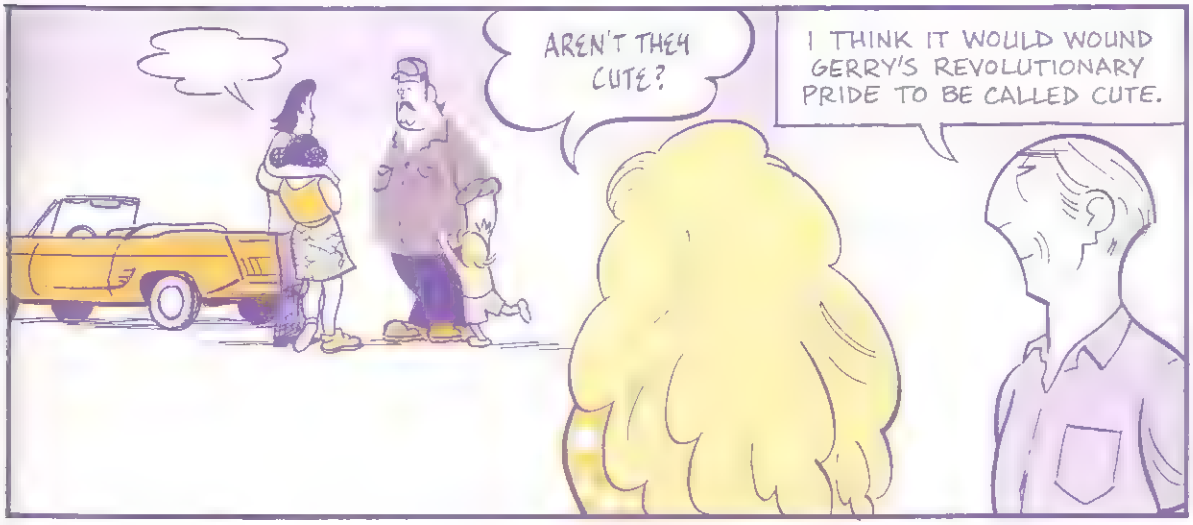


Hey, babe.
YO, RUNNING DOG!
SO, WHEN CAN I TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OFFER?
Well, we still don't have any gigs lined up yet...

WE'RE WORKIN' ON IT. I GOTTA CALL A FEW GUYS BACK.
hee he hee hee


BUT WE'LL LET YOU KNOW.

IT'LL BE SOON.


AREN'T THEY CUTE?
I THINK IT WOULD WOUND GERRY'S REVOLUTIONARY PRIDE TO BE CALLED CUTE.

IF STIFFLY DOESN'T NEED YOU TOMORROW, JACKSON AND I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE YOU ON A PICNIC.
Ana Ronny Doug!
I'LL HAVE TO CHECK WITH THE BOSS...
We're not too busy. Knock yourself up.
I SUPPOSE THAT MEANS IT'S OKAY
ALL RIGHT, THEN. SEE YOU BOYS FOR DINNER.
BY THE WAY, STIFF, I'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK YOU...
TO REPAIR
WHAT'S WITH THE PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS ON THE CADDY?

You know we got a flooding problem, right? One time, a few years back, we lost the electric for two weeks.

I started thinkin' how everythin's connected to the power gridiron...

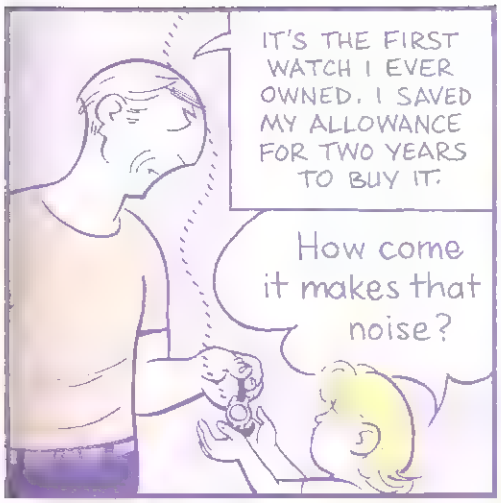
...and two weeks— that's not even a fraction of what we coulda lost.

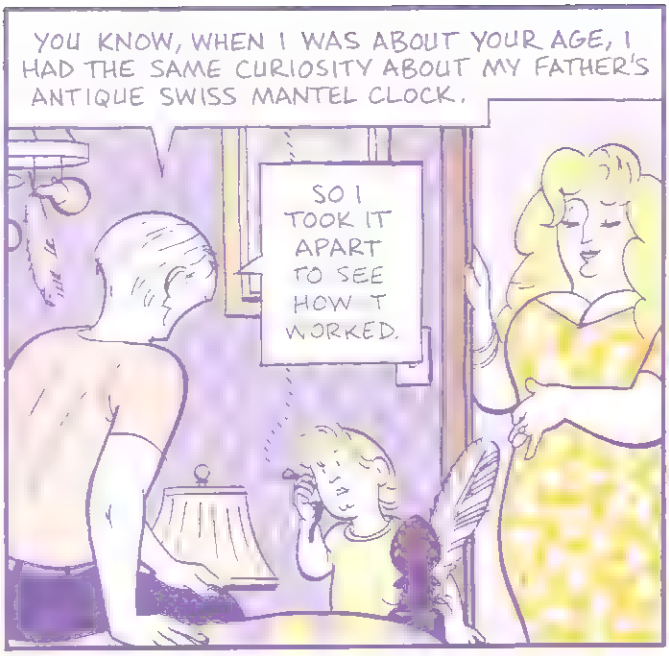
So I put some solar panels on the house, and that made me think about playin' with this old heap.

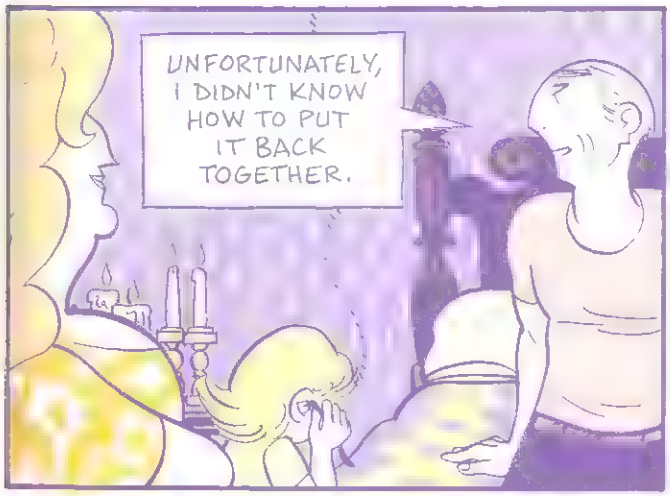
I even got her to putter around a little...

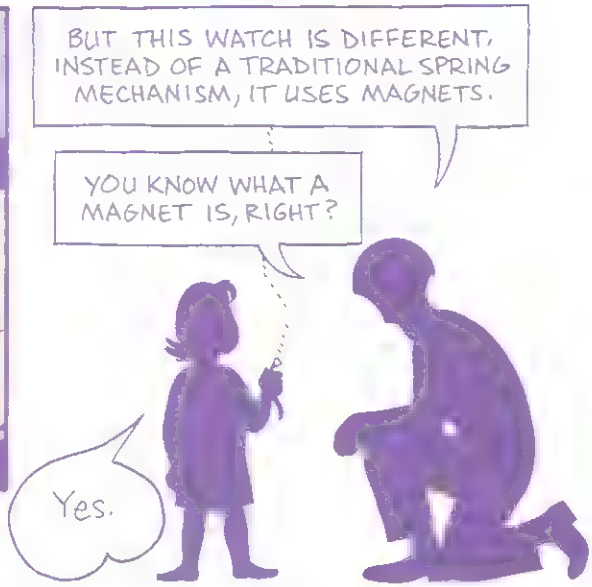
...'cept for when you had too many rainy days in a row.

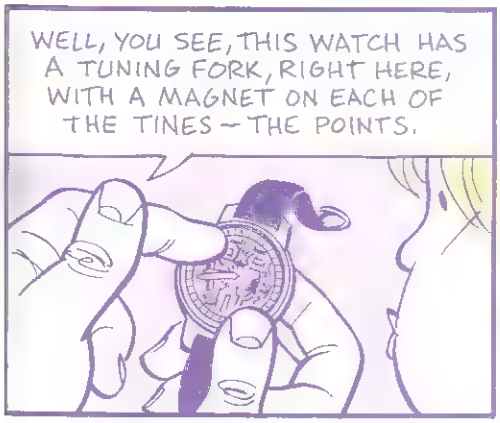
JACKSON! TIME FOR BED!
PAT
PAT
PAT
PAT
PAT
PAT PAT
HEY THERE, RUNNING DOG. ISN'T IT YOUR BEDTIME?
What's that noise?
YOU MEAN THIS?
IT'S MY WATCH.

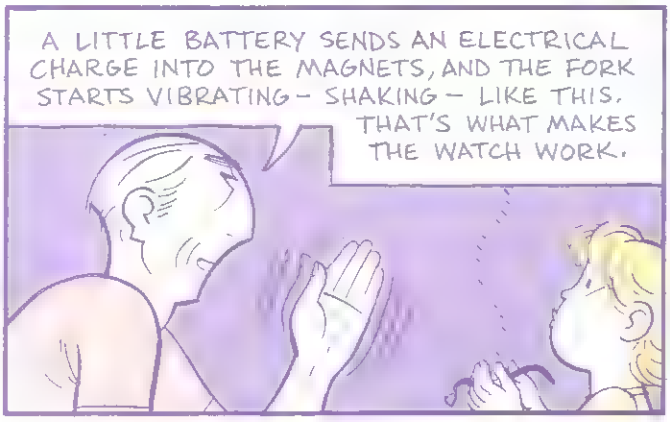

IT'S THE FIRST WATCH I EVER OWNED. I SAVED MY ALLOWANCE FOR TWO YEARS TO BUY IT.
How come it makes that noise?


YOU KNOW, WHEN I WAS ABOUT YOUR AGE, I HAD THE SAME CURIOSITY ABOUT MY FATHER'S ANTIQUE SWISS MANTEL CLOCK.
SO I TOOK IT APART TO SEE HOW IT WORKED.

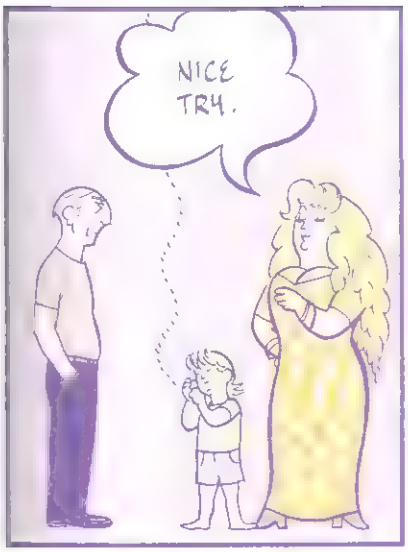

UNFORTUNATELY, I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO PUT IT BACK TOGETHER.

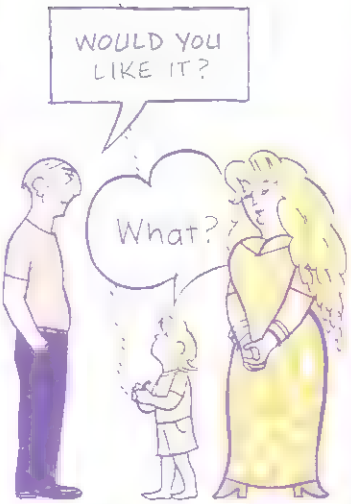

BUT THIS WATCH IS DIFFERENT. INSTEAD OF A TRADITIONAL SPRING MECHANISM, IT USES MAGNETS.
YOU KNOW WHAT A MAGNET IS, RIGHT?
Yes.

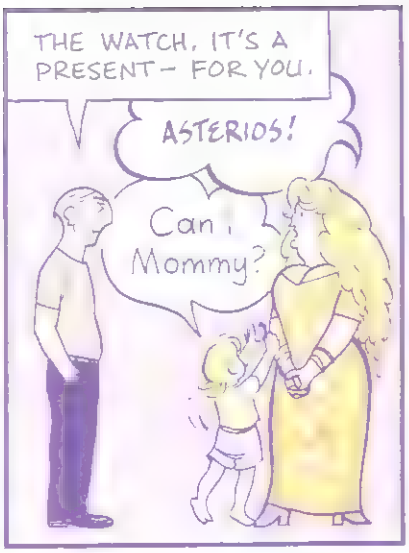

WELL, YOU SEE, THIS WATCH HAS A TUNING FORK, RIGHT HERE, WITH A MAGNET ON EACH OF THE TINES – THE POINTS.

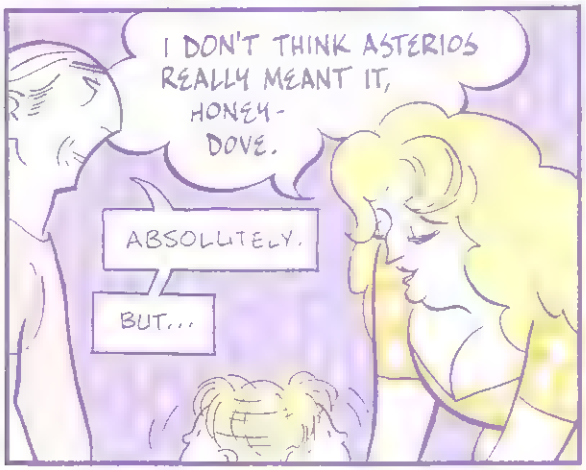

A LITTLE BATTERY SENDS AN ELECTRICAL CHARGE INTO THE MAGNETS, AND THE FORK STARTS VIBRATING – SHAKING – LIKE THIS.
THAT'S WHAT MAKES THE WATCH WORK.

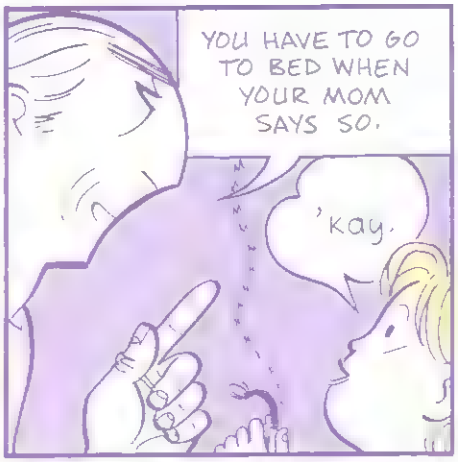
I CAN NEVER WEAR A WATCH. MY MAGNETIC FIELD ALWAYS SCREWS THEM UP.
NOW, WHEN THE TUNING FORK IS VIBRATING – SHAKING – IT MAKES A SOUND, LIKE A MUSICAL NOTE.
IT'S LIKE WHEN YOU PLUCK A GUITAR STRING – THE STRING MAKES A SOUND AND THAT SOUND LASTS UNTIL THE STRING STOPS VIBRATING.
IN HERE, THE MAGNETS WON'T LET THE FORK STOP VIBRATING, SO IT KEEPS HUMMING.
OF COURSE, THE SOUND IS LITTLE BECAUSE THE WATCH IS SO SMALL...
BUT IF WE MOVE THE VIBRATION TO SOMETHING BIG AND HOLLOW...
Cool!
UNDERSTAND?
No.
I like the way it sounds.


NICE TRY.

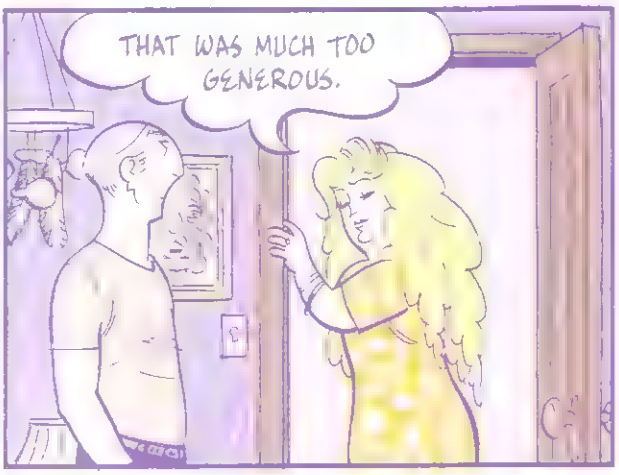

WOULD YOU LIKE IT?
What?


THE WATCH, IT'S A PRESENT – FOR YOU.
ASTERIOS!
Can I, Mommy?

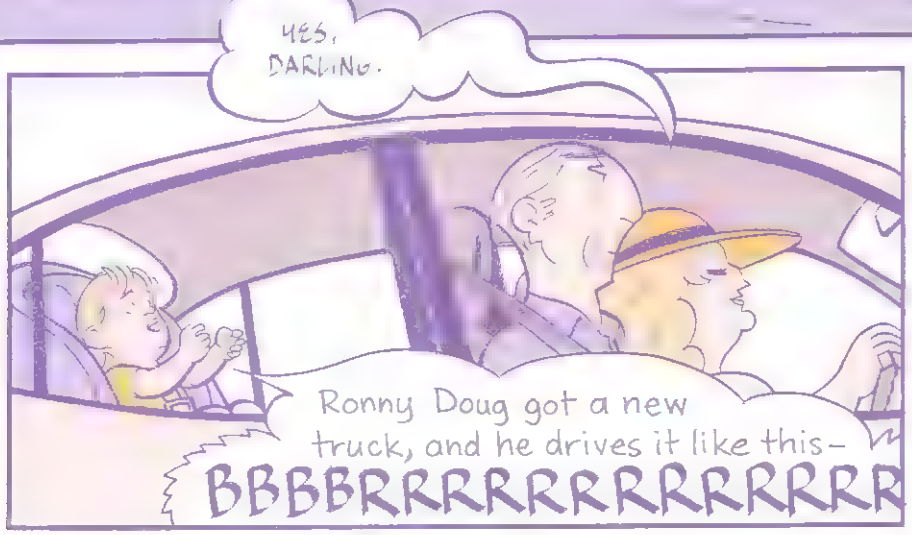

I DON'T THINK ASTERIOS REALLY MEANT IT, HONEY-DOVE.
ABSOLUTELY.
BUT...

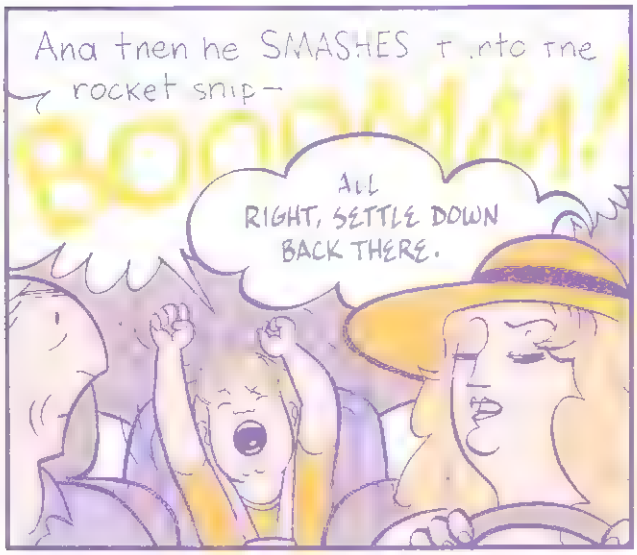

YOU HAVE TO GO TO BED WHEN YOUR MOM SAYS SO.
'kay.

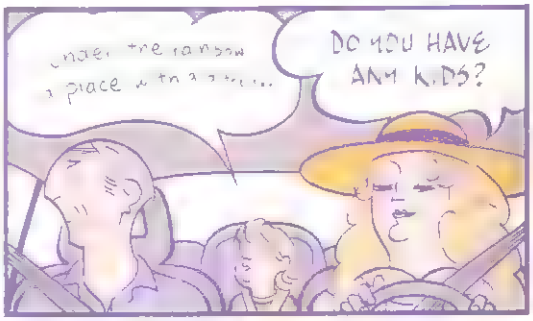
LET'S GO. SAY "THANK YOU!"
CLAP
CLAP
Thank you.

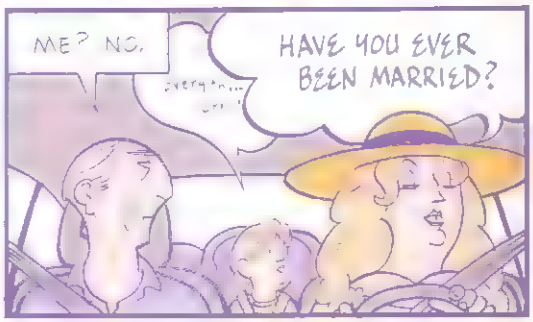

THAT WAS MUCH TOO GENEROUS.

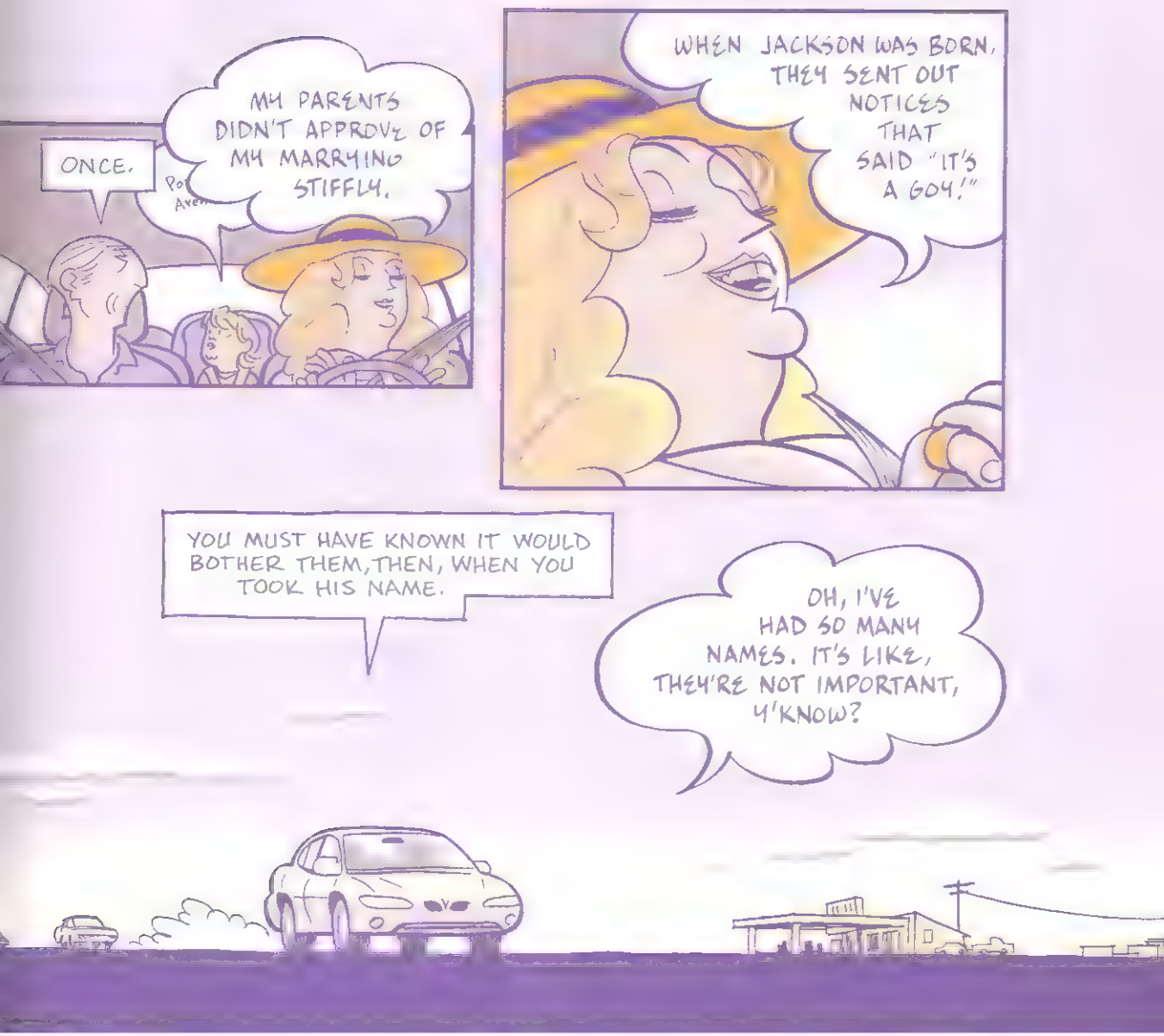
Are we goin' to the hole?

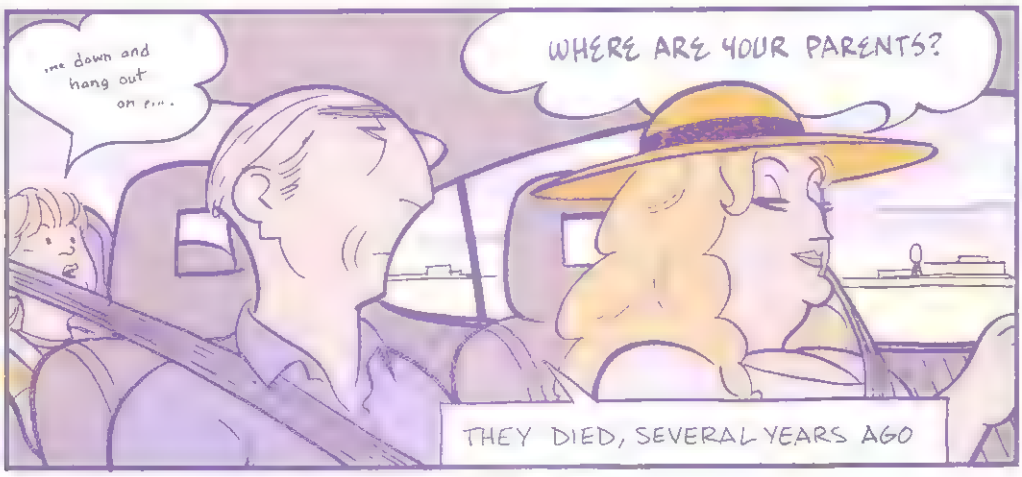

YES, DARLING.
Ronny Doug got a new truck, and he drives it like this–
BBBBRRRRRRRRRRRRRR


And then he SMASHES into the rocket ship–
BOOOMM!
ALL RIGHT, SETTLE DOWN BACK THERE.


DO YOU HAVE ANY KIDS?


ME? NO.
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN MARRIED?


ONCE.
MY PARENTS DIDN'T APPROVE OF MY MARRYING STIFFLY.
WHEN JACKSON WAS BORN, THEY SENT OUT NOTICES THAT SAID "IT'S A GOY!"
YOU MUST HAVE KNOWN IT WOULD BOTHER THEM, THEN, WHEN YOU TOOK HIS NAME.
OH, I'VE HAD SO MANY NAMES. IT'S LIKE, THEY'RE NOT IMPORTANT, Y'KNOW?


WHERE ARE YOUR PARENTS?
THEY DIED, SEVERAL YEARS AGO

MY FATHER HAD BEEN ILL FOR A LONG TIME. THEN IT TURNED OUT, ALL THE YEARS MY MOTHER HAD BEEN TAKING CARE OF HIM, SHE HAD CANCER AND DIDN'T KNOW IT.
ANY SIBLINGS?
NO
WHO'S RONNY DOUG?
MMM...

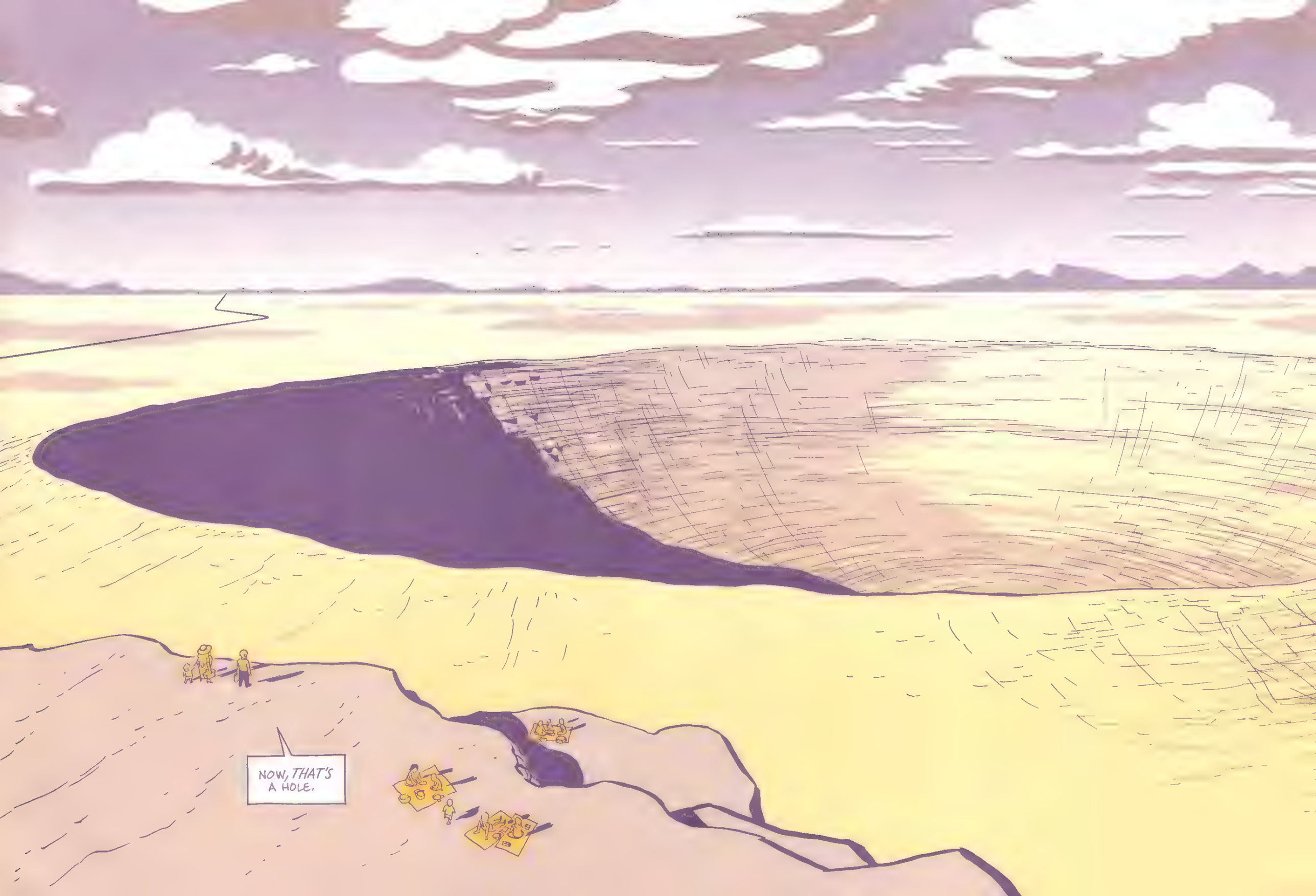
STIFFLY SAYS HE'S JACKSON'S IMAGINARY FRIEND, BUT...

...LIKE, WHO AM I TO SAY?

I MEAN, NONE OF US IS HERE BY ACCIDENT — WE ALL **ASKED** TO BE HERE, SO...

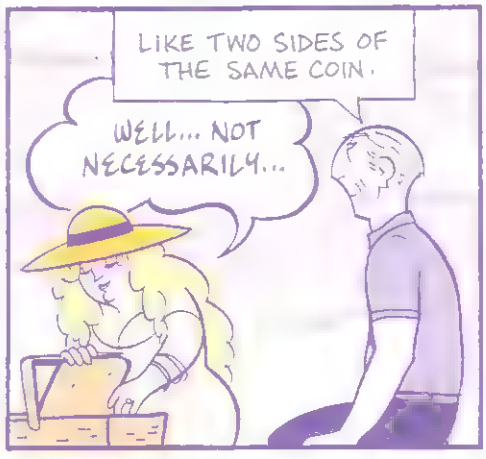
... IF HE SEES HIM, IF HE HEARS HIM — HELL, EVEN IF HE DID MAKE HIM UP —

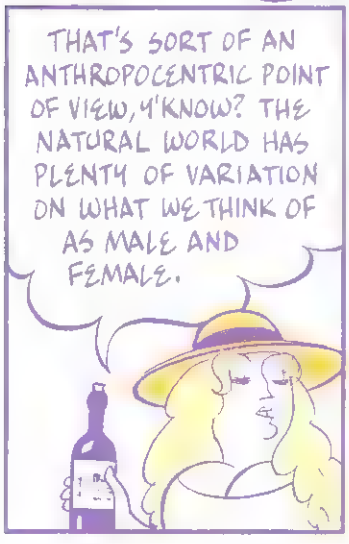
— HE MUST EXIST SOMEWHERE, Y'KNOW?


NOW, THAT'S A HOLE.

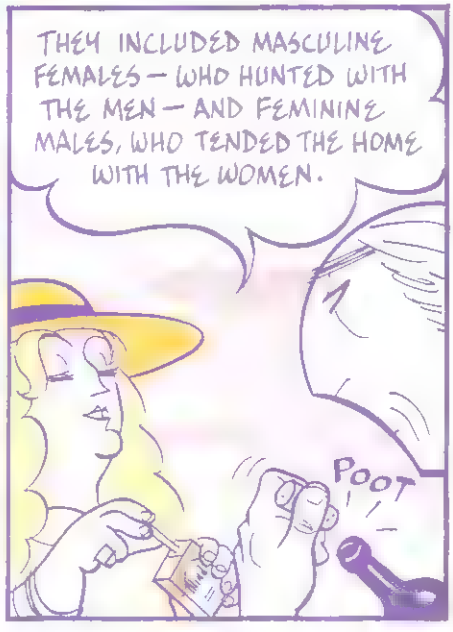
I LIKE TO COME OUT HERE FROM TIME TO TIME, JUST TO BE, LIKE, BLOWN AWAY BY THE SHEER PHYSICALITY OF THIS PLACE, Y KNOW?

A LOT OF ORIGIN TALES FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES TALK ABOUT THE SKY FATHER, THE EARTH MOTHER...
IT ALWAYS COMES DOWN TO MALE AND FEMALE, DOESN'T IT?


LIKE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN.
WELL... NOT NECESSARILY...


THAT'S SORT OF AN ANTHROPOCENTRIC POINT OF VIEW, Y'KNOW? THE NATURAL WORLD HAS PLENTY OF VARIATION ON WHAT WE THINK OF AS MALE AND FEMALE.

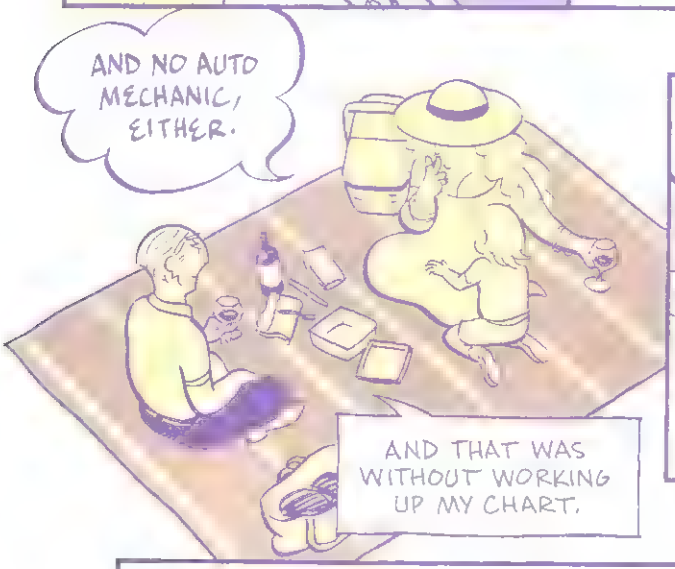
AND THEN IT DEPENDS ON, LIKE, HOW STRICT YOUR CLASSIFICATIONS ARE.
THE PIMA TRIBE, FOR EXAMPLE, RECOGNIZED FOUR DISTINCT SEXES.

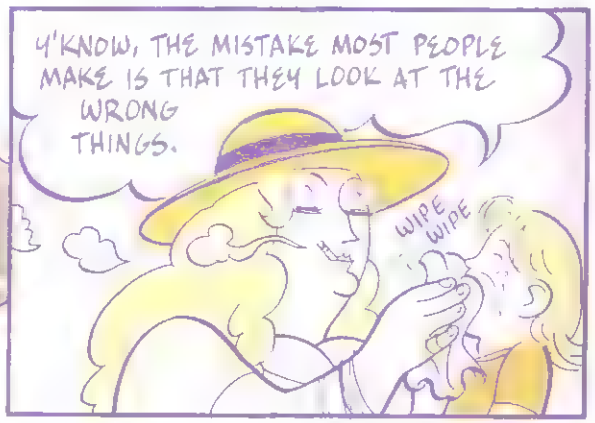

THEY INCLUDED MASCULINE FEMALES — WHO HUNTED WITH THE MEN — AND FEMININE MALES, WHO TENDED THE HOME WITH THE WOMEN.
POOT

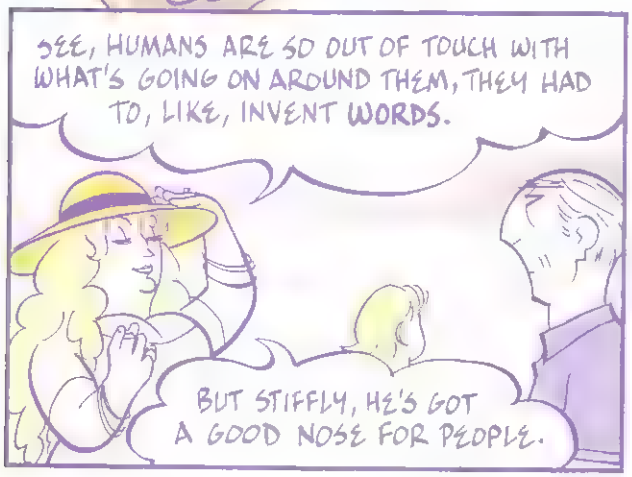
IN FACT, THESE TWO OFTEN BECAME SHAMANS BECAUSE THEY WERE RESPECTED FOR THEIR, Y'KNOW, DUAL NATURE.
THE WIDESPREAD ADOPTION OF A VIEW LIKE THAT WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE PRECLUDED A LOT OF MISERY IN THE WORLD.
WELL, Y'KNOW, IN LIFE, THINGS ARE SELDOM EITHER/OR.
IT'S THAT KIND OF SIMPLISTIC THINKING THAT CREATES FANATICS.
Murderer!
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I'VE PROBABLY ENGAGED IN SOME OF THAT SIMPLISTIC THINKING MYSELF.
WELL, AS STIFFLY WOULD SAY, HINDSIGHT IS FIFTY-FIFTY.
AND HE'D BE RIGHT!

DID HE TELL YOU THAT WHEN YOU FIRST SHOWED UP AT HIS SHOP WITH, LIKE, NOTHING BUT THE CLOTHES ON YOUR BACK, HE THOUGHT YOU'D JUST GOT OUT OF PRISON?
MA.
NOT EXACTLY.

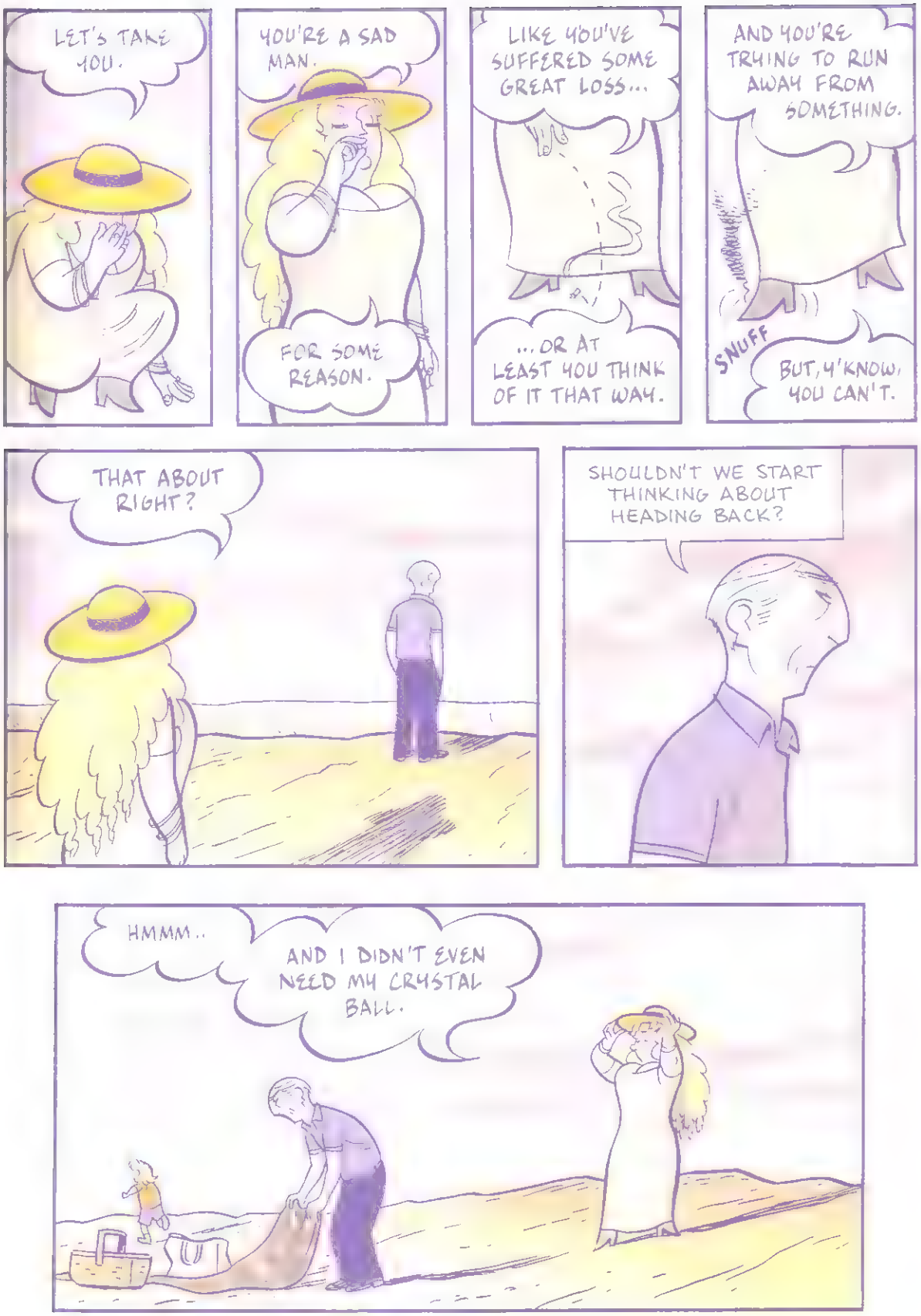
AND YOU?
I KNEW FROM THE MINUTE I MET YOU YOU WERE NO JAILBIRD.

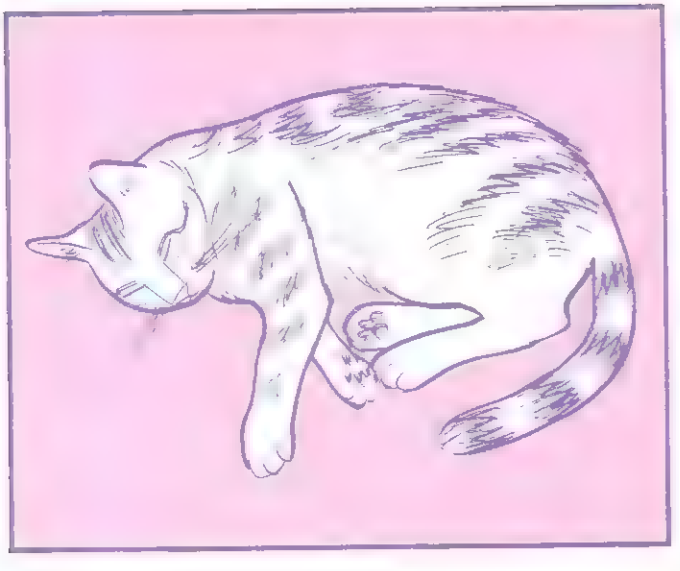

AND NO AUTO MECHANIC, EITHER.
AND THAT WAS WITHOUT WORKING UP MY CHART.


Y'KNOW, THE MISTAKE MOST PEOPLE MAKE IS THAT THEY LOOK AT THE WRONG THINGS.
WIPE WIPE


SEE, HUMANS ARE SO OUT OF TOUCH WITH WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND THEM, THEY HAD TO, LIKE, INVENT WORDS.
BUT STIFFLY, HE'S GOT A GOOD NOSE FOR PEOPLE.

AFTER ALL, FOLKS AREN'T SO HARD TO FIGURE OUT, Y'KNOW — YOU JUST IGNORE WHAT THEY SAY AND WATCH WHAT THEY DO.
IS THAT SO?

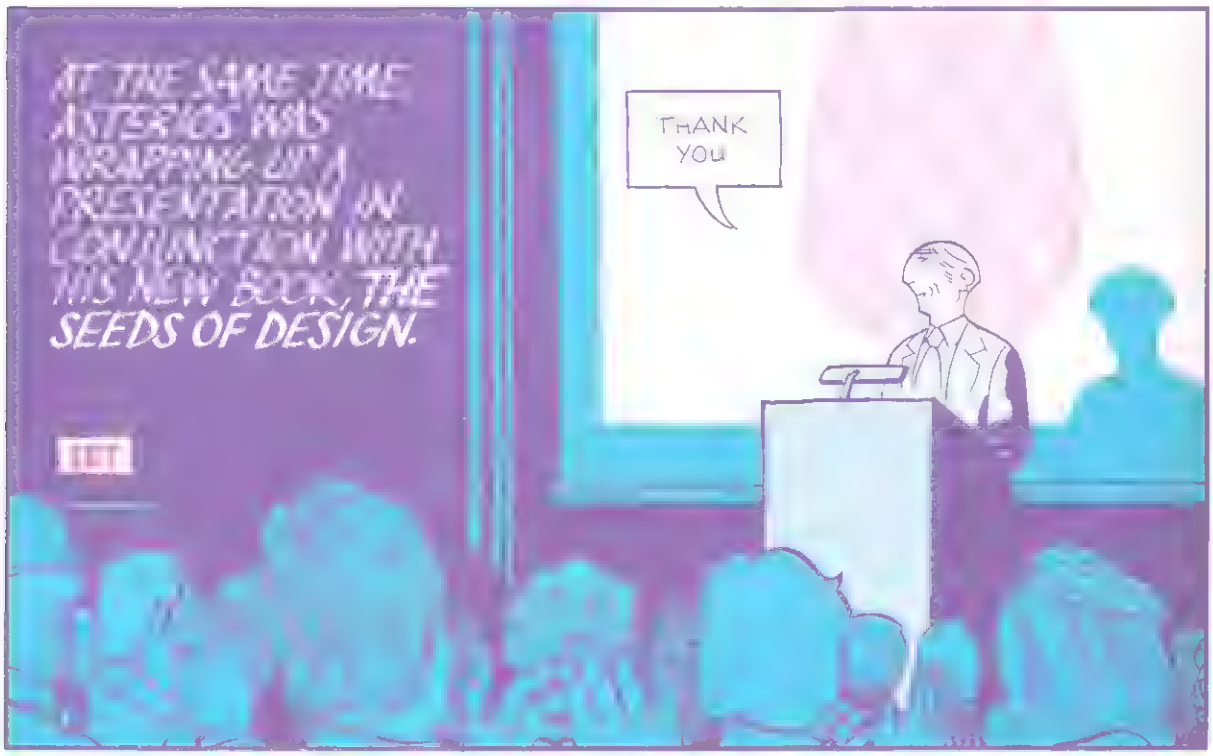

LET'S TAKE YOU.
YOU'RE A SAD MAN.
FOR SOME REASON.
LIKE YOU'VE SUFFERED SOME GREAT LOSS...
...OR AT LEAST YOU THINK OF IT THAT WAY.
AND YOU'RE TRYING TO RUN AWAY FROM SOMETHING.
SNUFF
BUT, Y'KNOW, YOU CAN'T.
THAT ABOUT RIGHT?
SHOULDN'T WE START THINKING ABOUT HEADING BACK?
HMMM..
AND I DIDN'T EVEN NEED MY CRYSTAL BALL.



IN THE FALL OF 1991, WILLY ILIUM ROLLED ONTO CAMPUS IN A FOG OF IMPORTANCE.

I AM WILLY ILIUM.

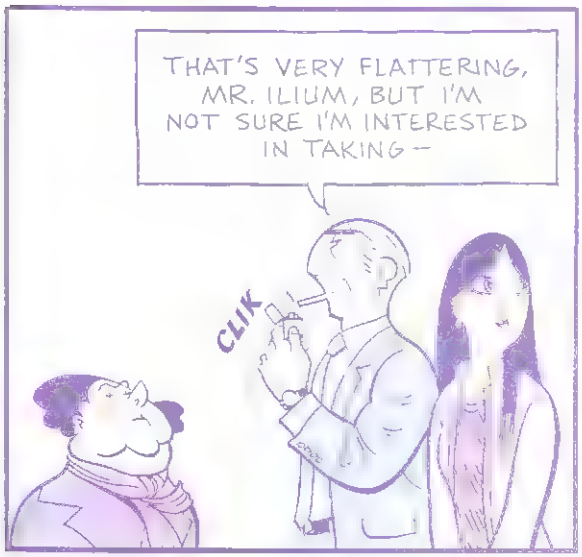
HE CLAIMED HE HAD COME TO DELIVER A LECTURE, BUT NO ONE COULD REMEMBER HAVING INVITED HIM.



A marvelous reexamination of "organic" moderns like Wright and Neutra viewed in the context of indiginous architecture and sustainability...
...but delivered with the giddiness of discovery, as if seeing a tree for the first time.
And that bit about "the humble pine cone"– I loved it!
HA!
WELL, IT'S JUST A MATTER OF PAYING ATTENTION.

I AM WILLY ILIUM. I WON'T BEAT AROUND THE BUSH – OR ANYWHERE IN ITS VICINITY, ONE OF THE REASONS I VENTURED HERE WAS TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE. I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING YOUR ENDEAVORS FOR SOME TIME.

I WISH TO PROPOSE A COLLABORATION. I HAVE BEEN ENGAGED TO CREATE A NEW THEATRICAL PRODUCTION, AND I WOULD LIKE YOU TO DESIGN THE SETS AND COSTUMES.


THAT'S VERY FLATTERING, MR. ILIUM, BUT I'M NOT SURE I'M INTERESTED IN TAKING –
CLIK

EXCUSE ME. I WASN'T TALKING TO YOU.

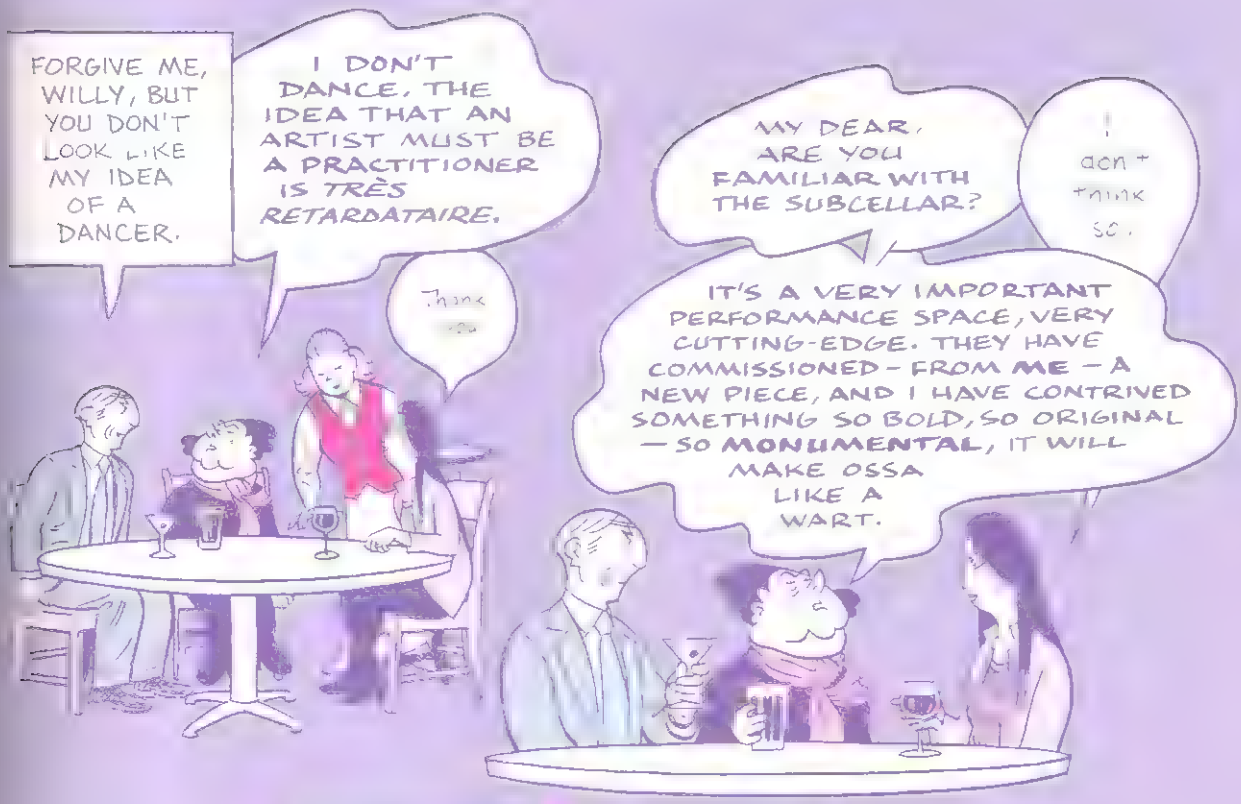
WILLY ILIUM WAS A CHOREOGRAPHER WHO TEN YEARS EARLIER, HAD EXCITED THE NEW YORK DANCE WORLD WITH HIS AUDACIOUS APPROACH TO CHOREOGRAPHY.

ESSENTIALLY, HIS PIECES WERE FORMED BY EXCISING SEQUENCES FROM FAMOUS DANCE COMPOSITIONS AND REASSEMBLING THEM INTO NEW WORKS,

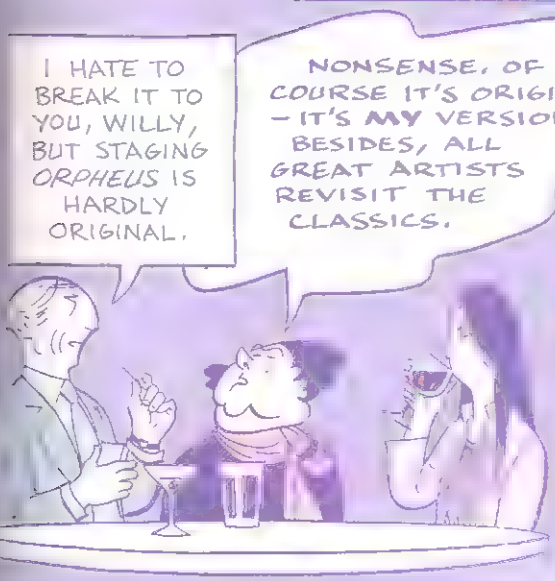
HE SEEMED TO HAVE APPLIED A SIMILAR METHOD TO HIS OWN NAME AS AS WELL.

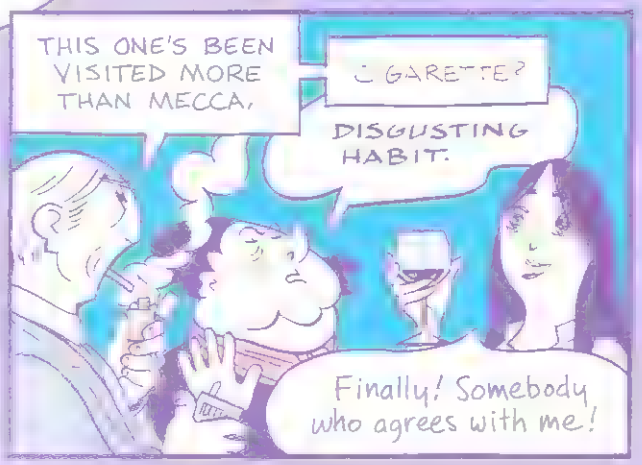
SO THAT BALANCHINE, PERROT, GRAHAM, AND THARP (TO NAME A FEW) RUBBED ELBOWS – AND ASSES – ONSTAGE.

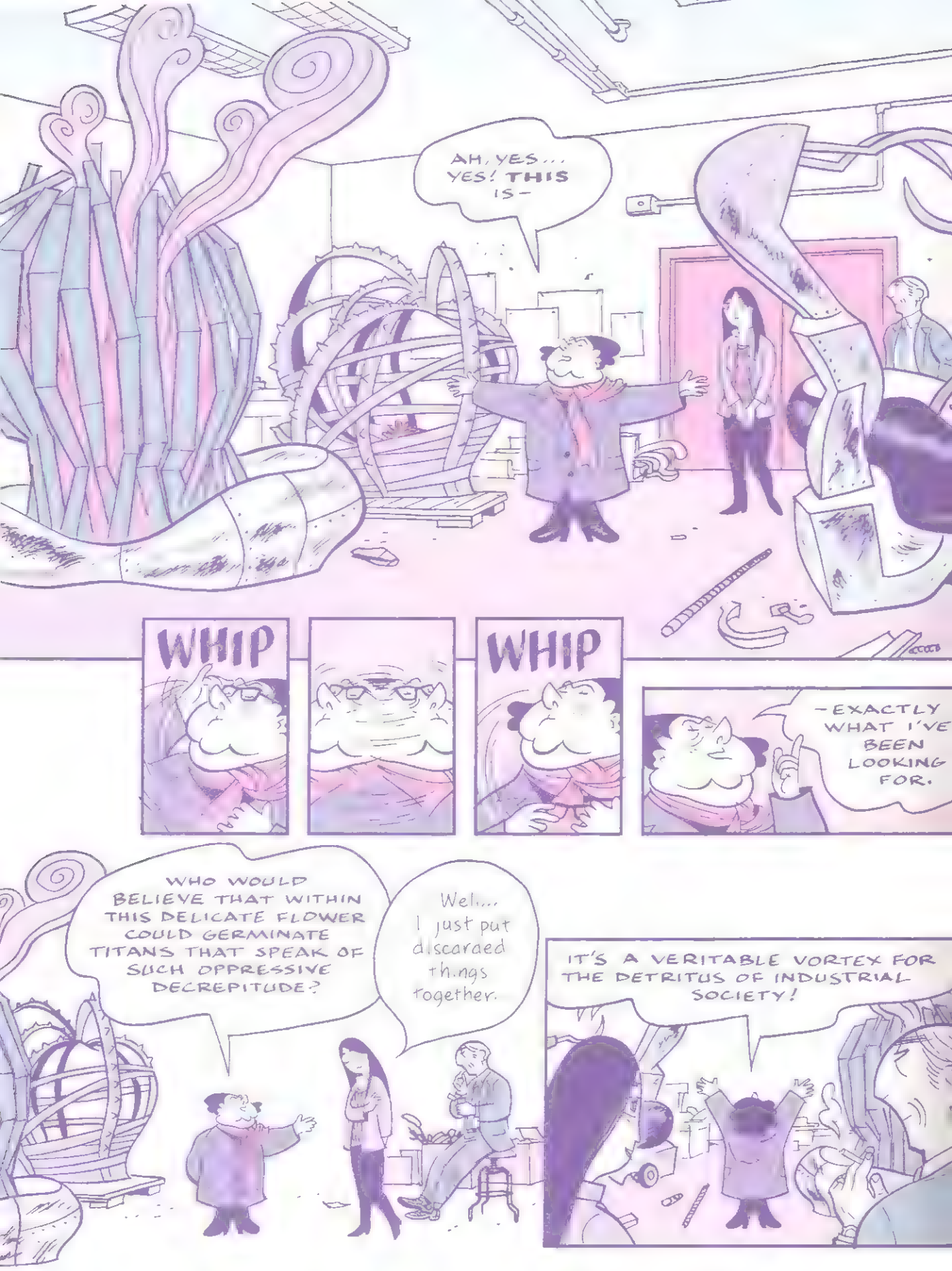
ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, ASTERIOS DUBBED HIM "WILLY CHIMERA."


FORGIVE ME, WILLY, BUT YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE MY IDEA OF A DANCER.
I DON'T DANCE. THE IDEA THAT AN ARTIST MUST BE A PRACTITIONER IS TRÈS RETARDATAIRE.
Think so.
MY DEAR, ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE SUBCELLAR?
I don't think so.
IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT PERFORMANCE SPACE, VERY CUTTING-EDGE. THEY HAVE COMMISSIONED – FROM ME – A NEW PIECE, AND I HAVE CONTRIVED SOMETHING SO BOLD, SO ORIGINAL – SO MONUMENTAL, IT WILL MAKE OSSA LIKE A WART.

AND THAT IS?
ORPHEUS (UNDERGROUND)!


I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU, WILLY, BUT STAGING ORPHEUS IS HARDLY ORIGINAL.
NONSENSE. OF COURSE IT'S ORIGINAL – IT'S MY VERSION. BESIDES, ALL GREAT ARTISTS REVISIT THE CLASSICS.


THIS ONE'S BEEN VISITED MORE THAN MECCA.
CIGARETTE?
DISGUSTING HABIT.
Finally! Somebody who agrees with me!


AH, YES... YES! THIS IS–
WHIP
WHIP
–EXACTLY WHAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR.
WHO WOULD BELIEVE THAT WITHIN THIS DELICATE FLOWER COULD GERMINATE TITANS THAT SPEAK OF SUCH OPPRESSIVE DECREPITUDE?
Wel... I just put discaraed th.ngs together.
IT'S A VERITABLE VORTEX FOR THE DETRITUS OF INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY!

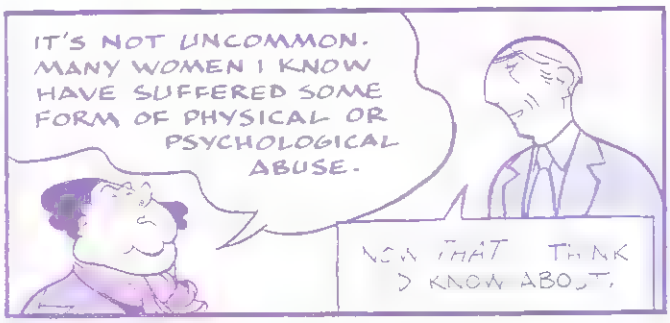
AND YET...

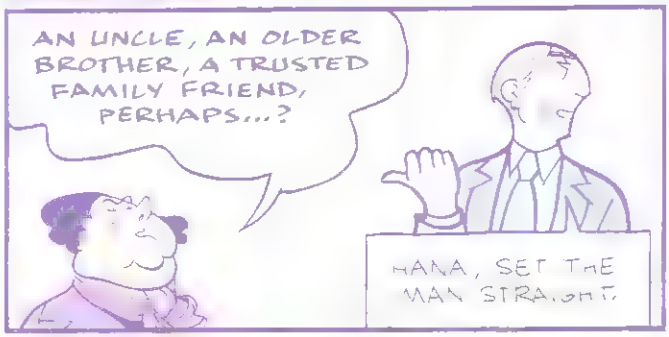
...WITHIN EACH PIECE...

...A SPARK OF RENEWAL, A HOPE OF SALVATION...

...LIKE A WOUNDED BIRD SHELTERED BY AN IRON FIST.

TELL ME, WERE YOU ABUSED AS A CHILD?
WHAT?


IT'S NOT UNCOMMON. MANY WOMEN I KNOW HAVE SUFFERED SOME FORM OF PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE.
NOW THAT THINK I KNOW ABOUT.


AN UNCLE, AN OLDER BROTHER, A TRUSTED FAMILY FRIEND, PERHAPS...?
HANA, SET THE MAN STRAIGHT.

Shouldn't we start thinking about heading to the restaurant...?

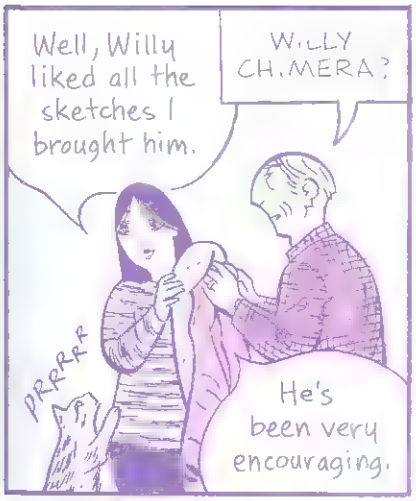
HANA ACCEPTED THE JOB, AND SET TO WORK WITH HER CUSTOMARY DILIGENCE.

AND (AS USUAL), FEARING FAILURE, SHE OBSESSED OVER EVERY MARK IN EVERY DRAWING.

SHE ALSO BEGAN MAKING WEEKEND TRIPS TO NEW YORK FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH WILLY ILIUM.

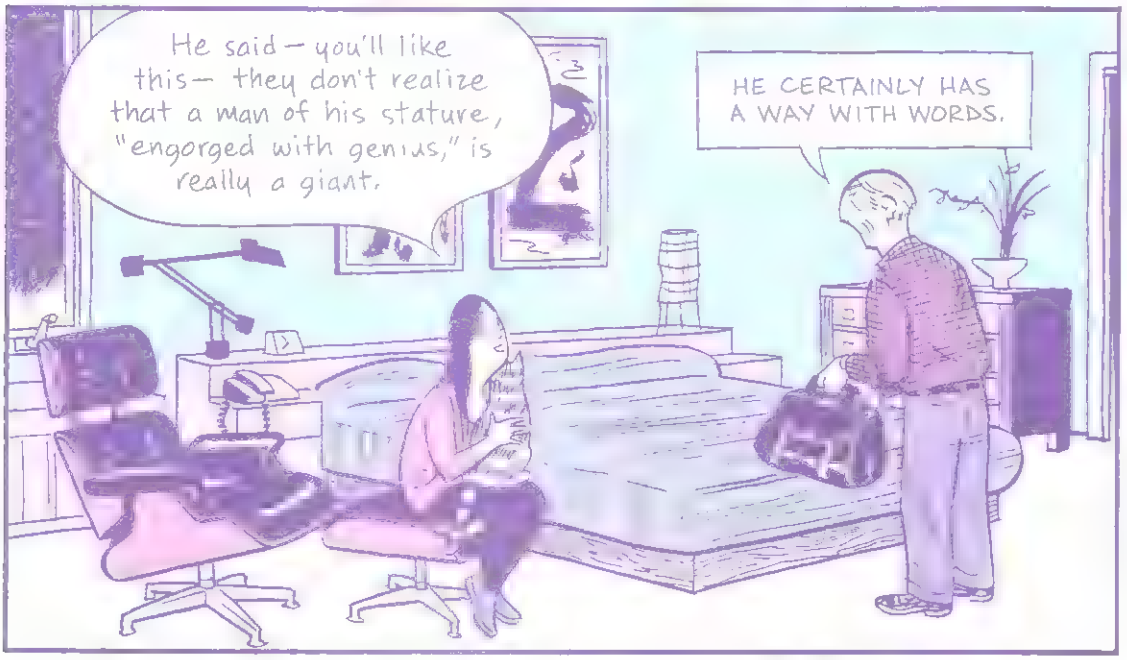
I'm back.

MRRRAAAORRRAO
SOMEBODY MISSED YOU.
MOW? MY DOG?

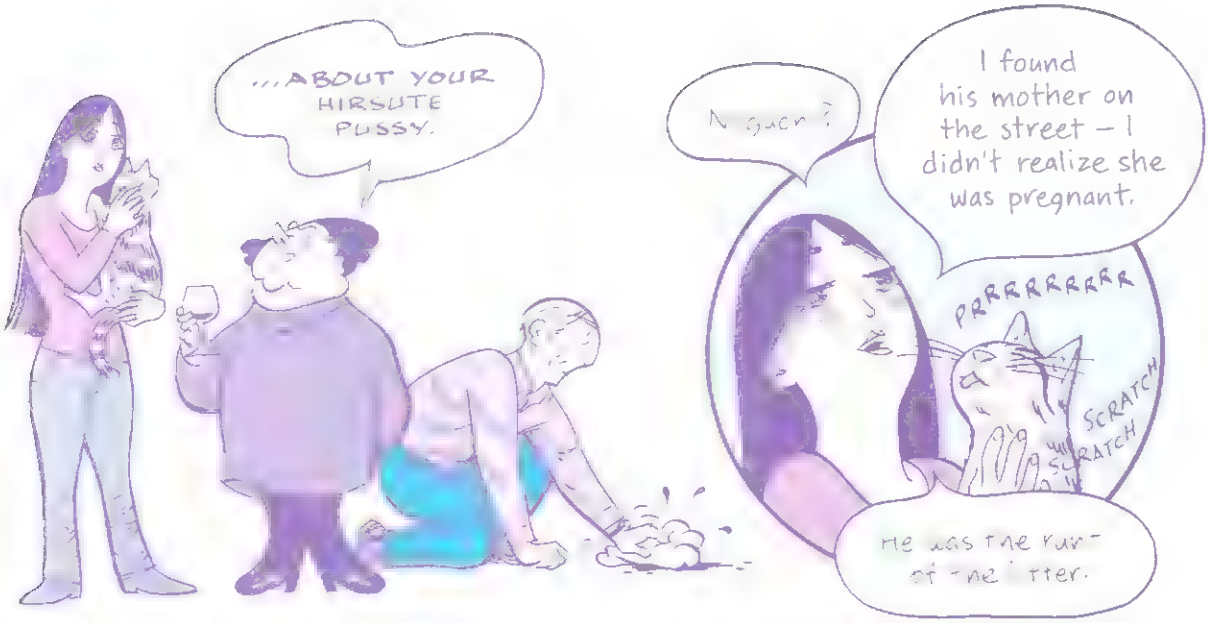

Well, Willy liked all the sketches I brought him.
WILLY CHIMERA?
He's been very encouraging.
PRRRRR

He said he doesn't want me to hold back— he wants to see me naked, exposed.
DO HE REALLY?

Then he went on a half-hour tirade about how the dancers don't respect him because he's shorter than they are.


He said— you'll like this— they don't realize that a man of his stature, "engorged with genius," is really a giant.
HE CERTAINLY HAS A WAY WITH WORDS.

OCCASIONALLY, ASTERIOS ACCOMPANIED HANA TO NEW YORK.

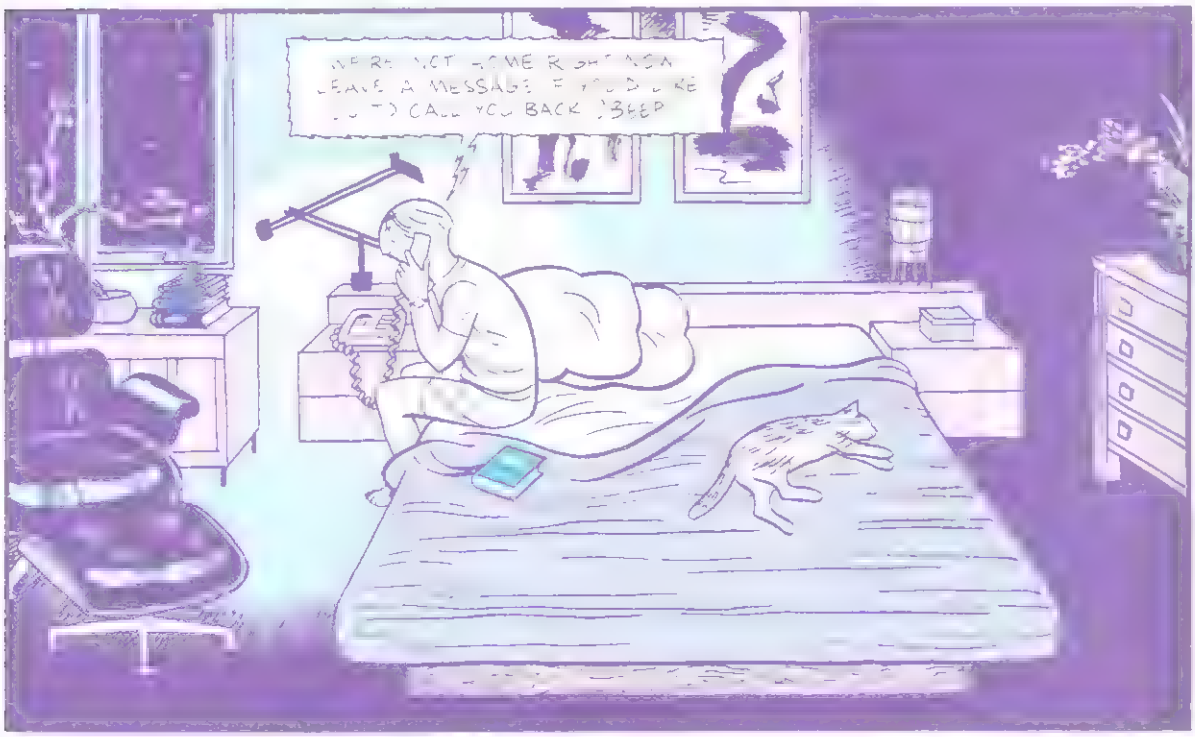

...ABOUT YOUR HIRSUTE PUSSY.
I found his mother on the street — I didn't realize she was pregnant.
PRRRRRRRR
SCRATCH SCRATCH

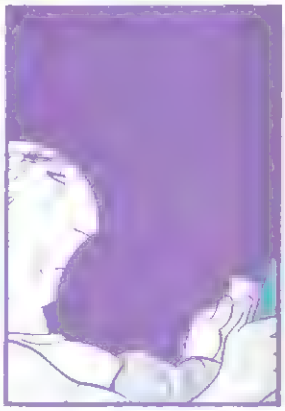
He needed help from the first day— when his brothers were nursing, he couldn't find the teat.
As he got older, he had a lot of health problems — I almost lost him a few times.

I gave the others away to good homes, but... I knew I had to keep this one.
a special relationship.

STROKE ME LIKE THAT AND I'LL SHOW YOU A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP.

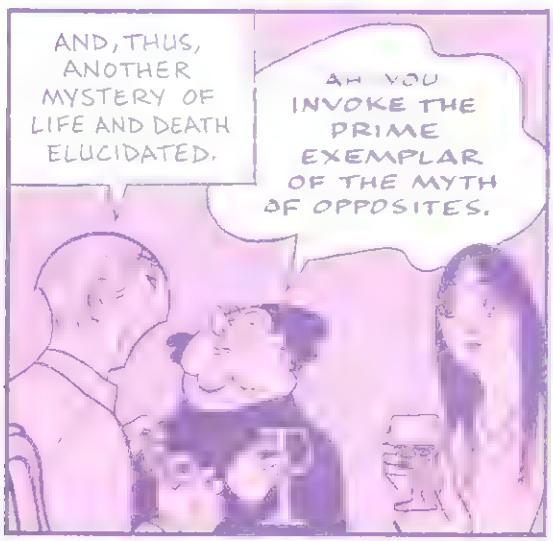
SOON, ALMOST ALL OF HANA'S FREE TIME SEEMED TO BE DEVOTED TO **ORPHEUS (UNDERGROUND)**.

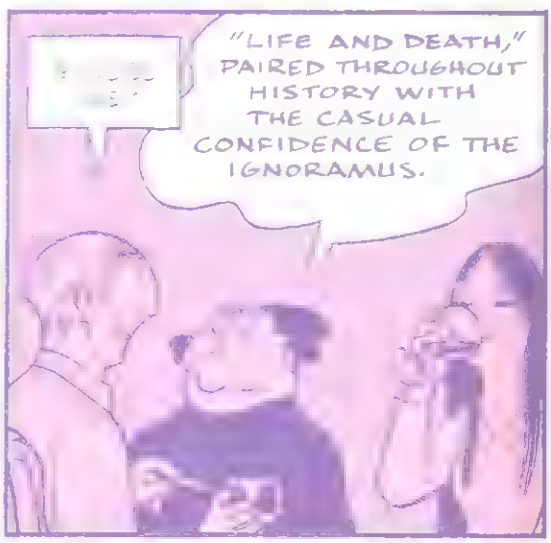


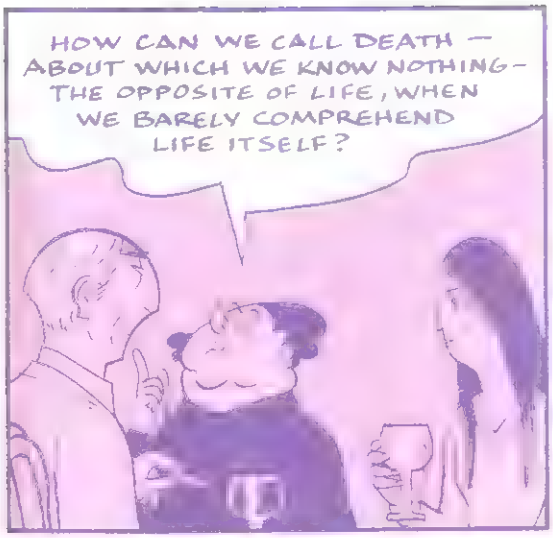


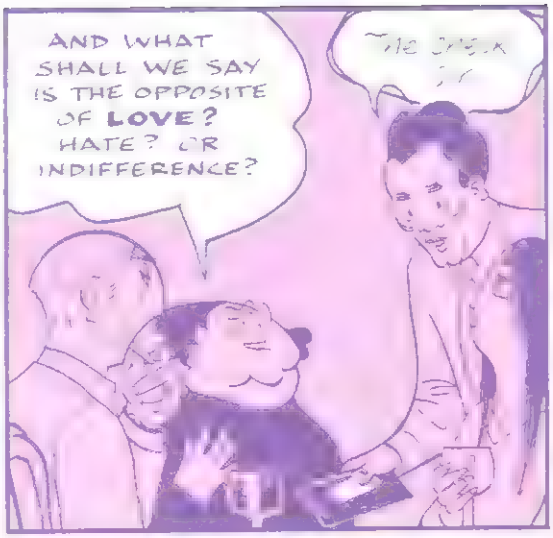
DOOT DEET DOOT DOOT DEET
WE'RE NOT HOME RIGHT NOW. LEAVE A MESSAGE IF YOU'D
DOOT DEET DOOT DOOT DEET
WE'RE NOT HOME RIGHT NOW. LEAVE A
Hello?
HANA?
ARE
OKAY?
LITTLE WORRIED.
Oh, I wuzzout with Willy Illimerium..
sez I'm a treasure
unlock...
WELL, I'M GLAD YOU GOT HOME SAFELY. I WANTED
HE'S FINE. LOOK, LET'S TALK IN THE MORNING. WHY DON'T YOU GIVE ME A CALL WHEN YOU GET UP. ALL RIGHT?
HANA?
ZZZZZZZZZZZ

THIS MEANT THAT ASTERIOS WAS TREATED TO THE WILLY CHIMERA EXPERIENCE A LITTLE MORE OFTEN THAN HE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED.



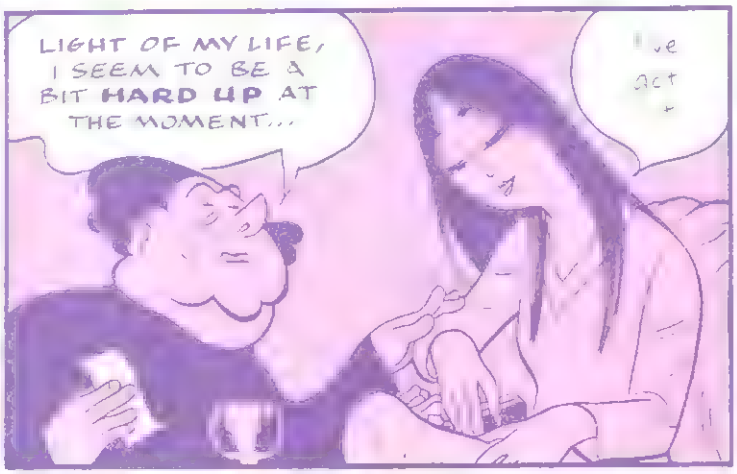



HOW CAN WE CALL DEATH — ABOUT WHICH WE KNOW NOTHING — THE OPPOSITE OF LIFE, WHEN WE BARELY COMPREHEND LIFE ITSELF?


AND WHAT SHALL WE SAY IS THE OPPOSITE OF **LOVE**? HATE? OR INDIFFERENCE?

WHIP

WHIP


LIGHT OF MY LIFE, I SEEM TO BE A BIT **HARD UP** AT THE MOMENT...

IS THIS A COMMON OCCURENCE?
Every time
$

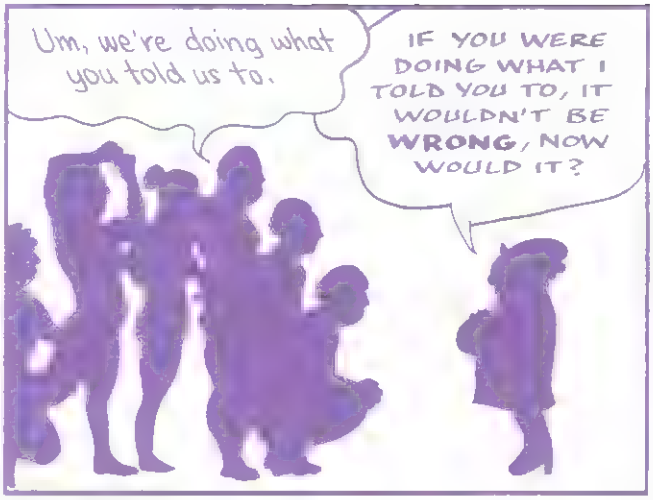
SO THIS IS WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS
HIT
AND, FROM THE TOP...

WHERE'S THE MUSIC?
HMM?

THE MUSIC? FOR THE DANCERS?
OH, THAT WILL COME LATER. KALVIN IS WORKING ON IT NOW. IF NECESSARY, I'LL CUT IT UP TO –

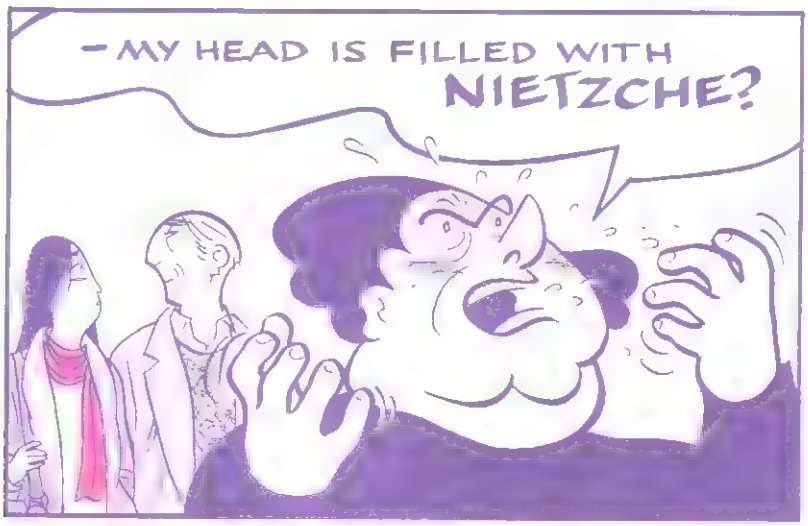
WAIT – STOP!
STOP!

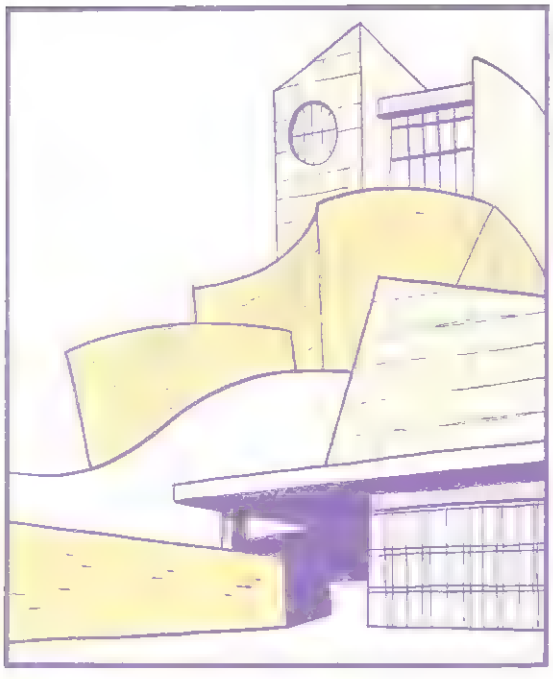
THAT'S ALL WRONG!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

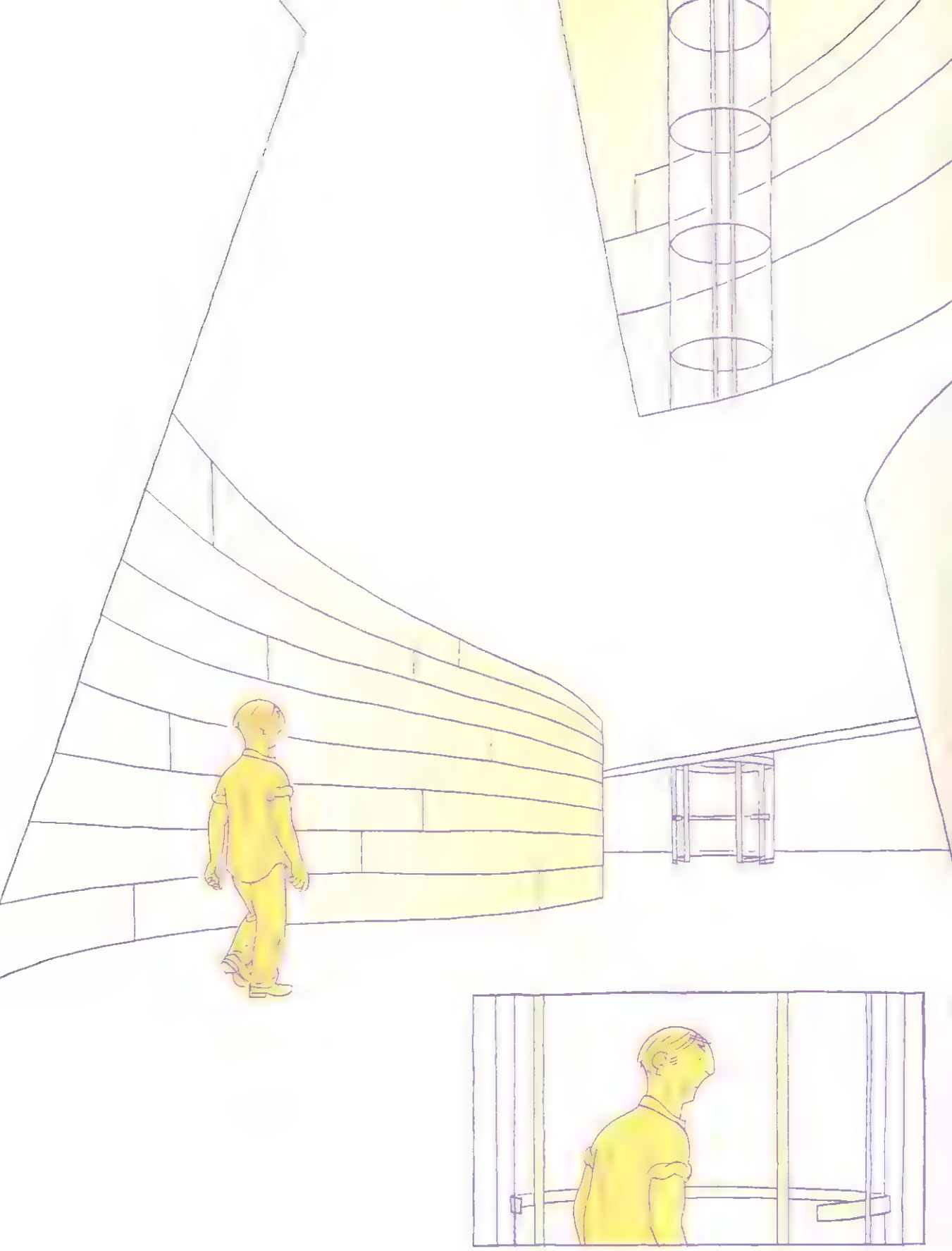

Um, we're doing what you told us to.
IF YOU WERE DOING WHAT I TOLD YOU TO, IT WOULDN'T BE **WRONG**, NOW WOULD IT?

Well, we'll... try again.
YES, TRY, TRY! EVERYONE **TRIES!**

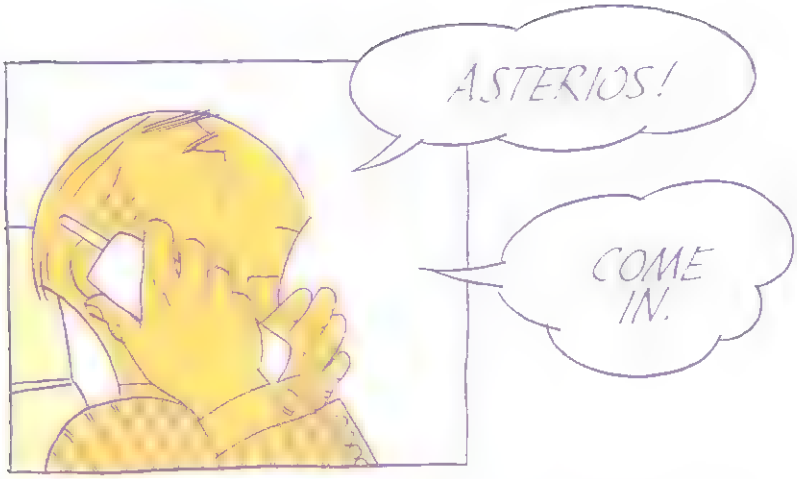
AM I FOREVER TO BE SABOTAGED BY **GOOD INTENTIONS?**
HOW CAN I HOPE TO SUCCEED SURROUNDED BY FLACCID IMAGINATIONS AND PUNY MINDS, WHEN MY HEAD–


–MY HEAD IS FILLED WITH **NIETZCHE?**

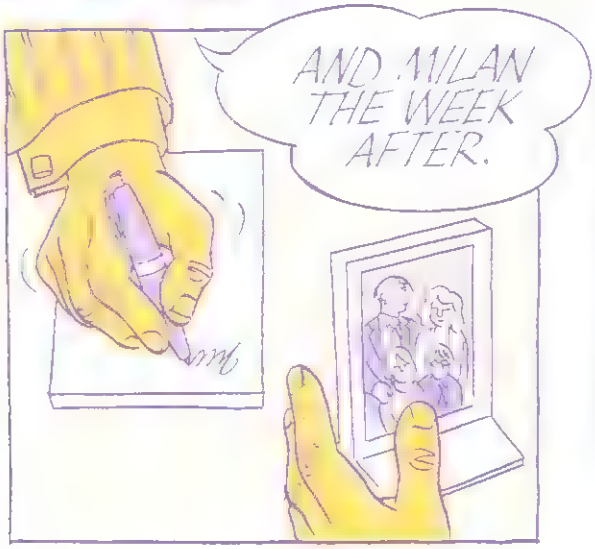


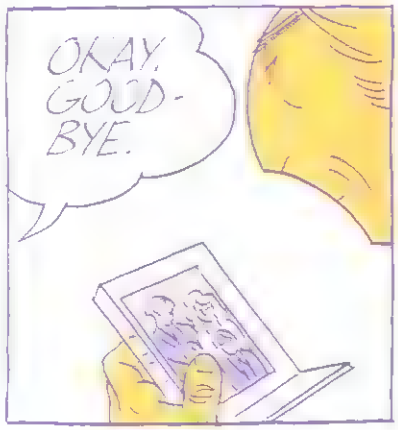


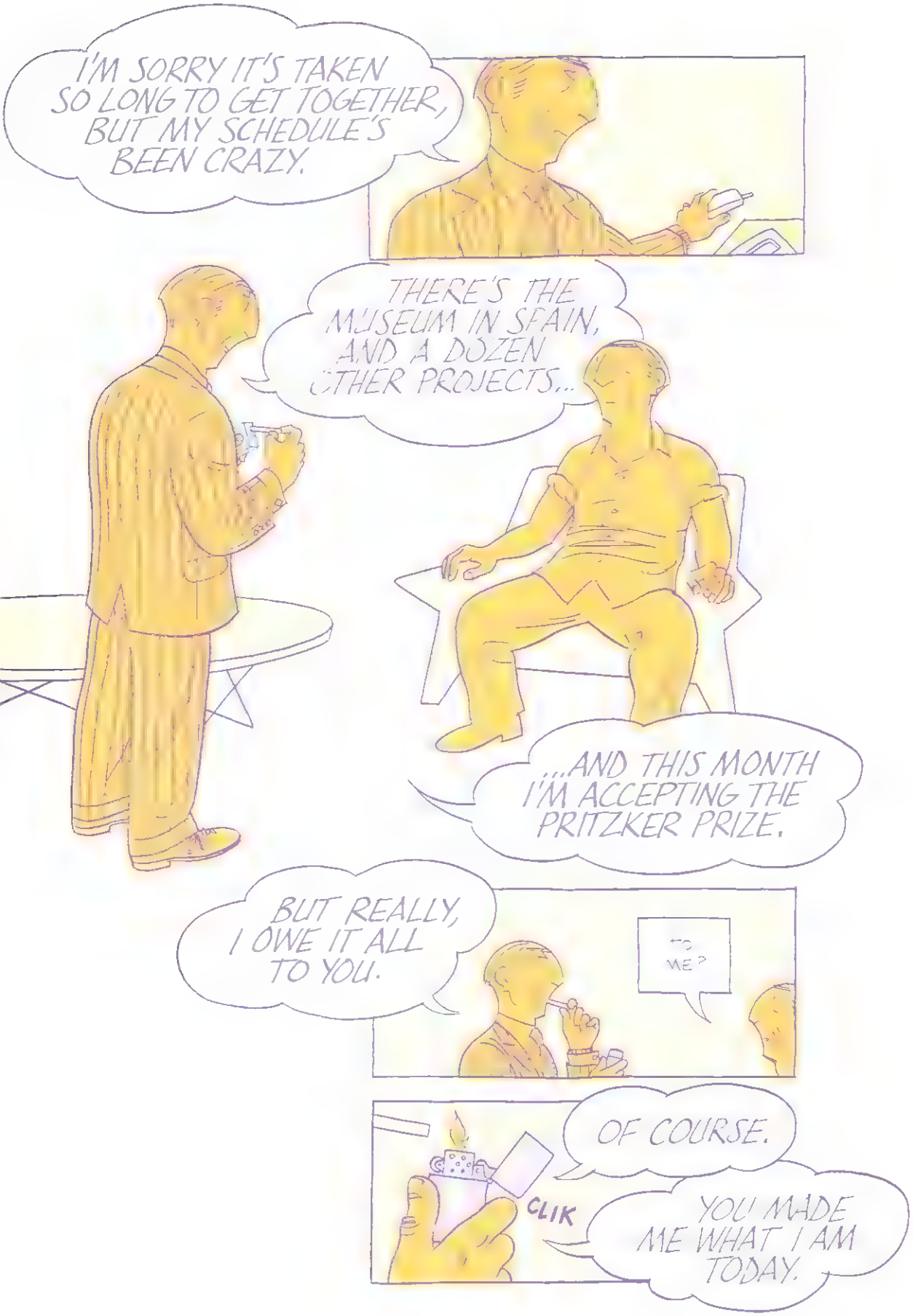
I. POLYP
ARCHITECT
...YES...
...YES...
...OF COURSE...


ASTERIOS!
COME IN.

NO, NEXT WEEK I'LL BE IN BARCELONA.

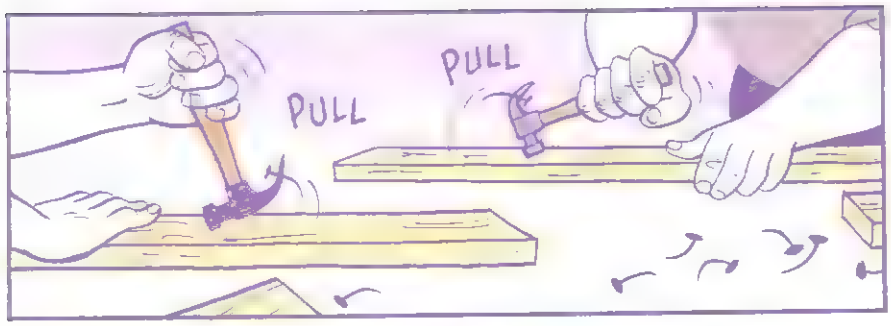

AND MILAN THE WEEK AFTER.

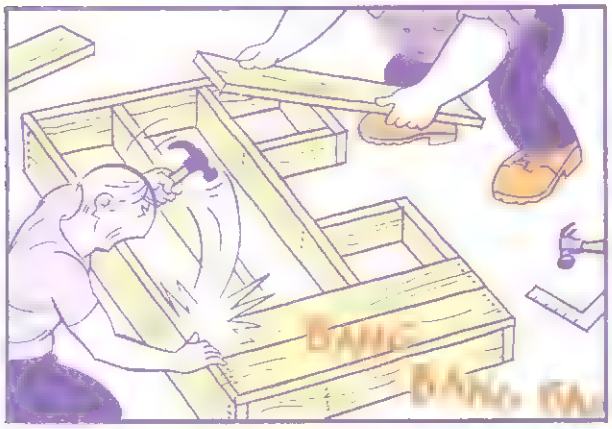

OKAY. GOOD-BYE.

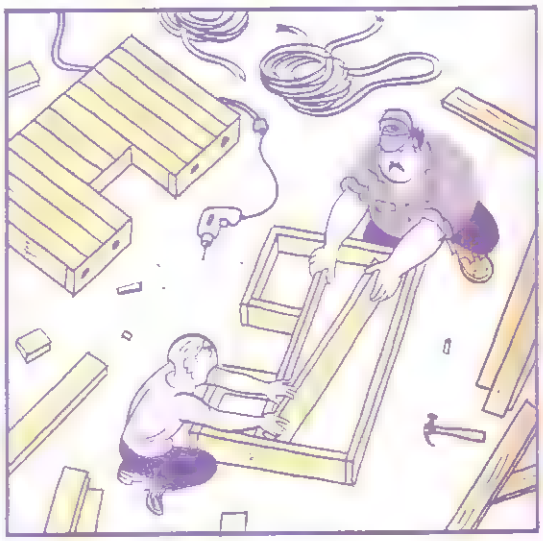

I'M SORRY IT'S TAKEN SO LONG TO GET TOGETHER, BUT MY SCHEDULE'S BEEN CRAZY.
THERE'S THE MUSEUM IN SPAIN, AND A DOZEN OTHER PROJECTS...
...AND THIS MONTH I'M ACCEPTING THE PRITZKER PRIZE.
BUT REALLY, I OWE IT ALL TO YOU.
ME?
OF COURSE.
CLIK
YOU MADE ME WHAT I AM TODAY.

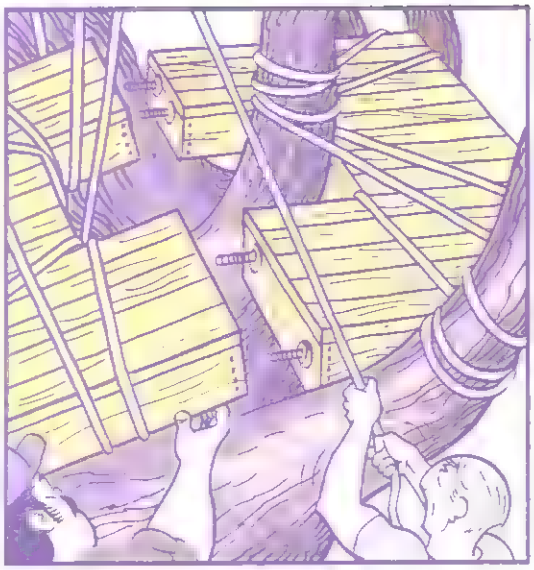
WHAT'S ALL THIS?
Can you believe this stuff was bein' tossed away?
Lookit – the wood's all straight.
We just gotta pull the nails out an' it'll be perfect.
FOR WHAT?

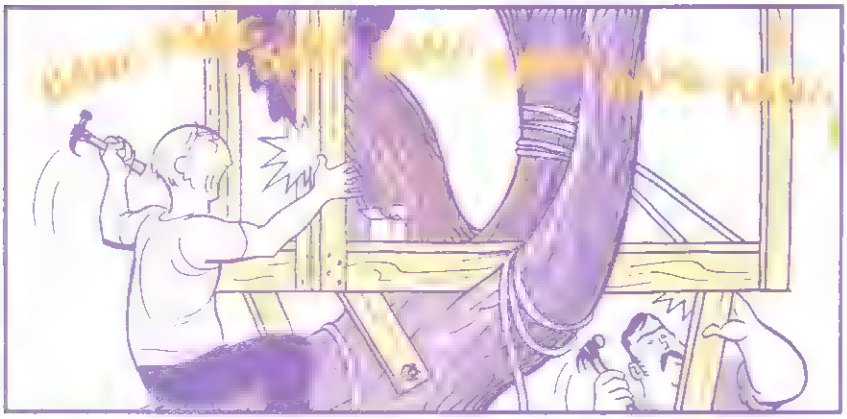
Somethin' you can gimme a hand with.
I wanna make a tree house for Jackson, an' now that we got the wood...
WHEN DO WE START?
I'm no Frank Lord Wright or anythin', but I made a little sketch...
I was thinkin' about puttin' a couple a' windows in this wall.
hole
door
hole
bolt
LOOKS GREAT.

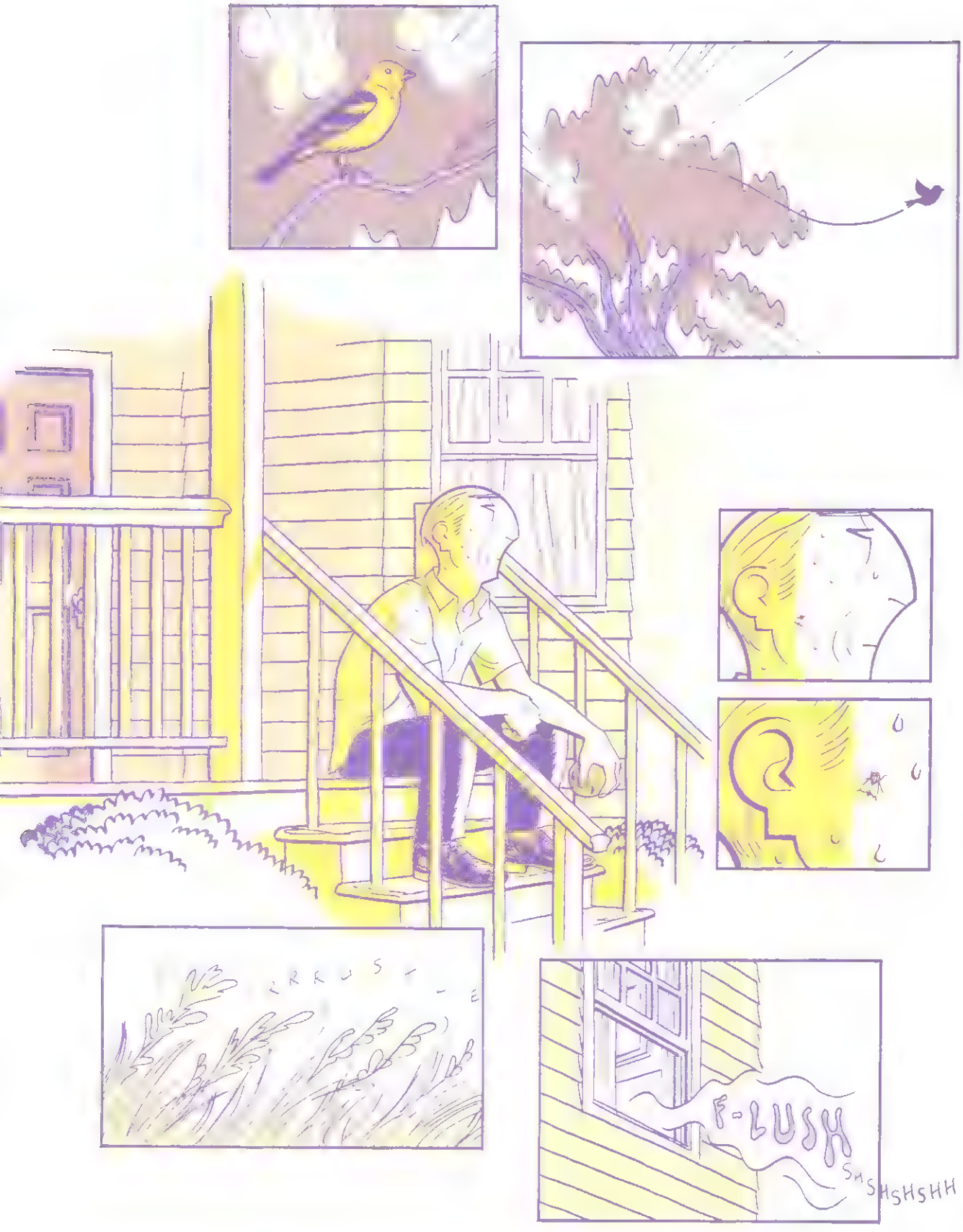

PULL
PULL


BANG

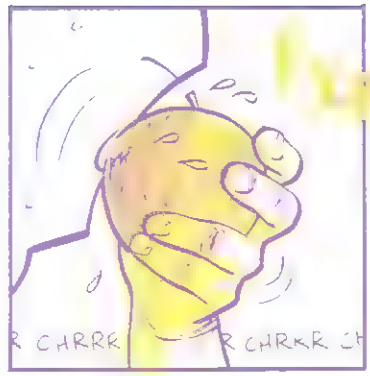


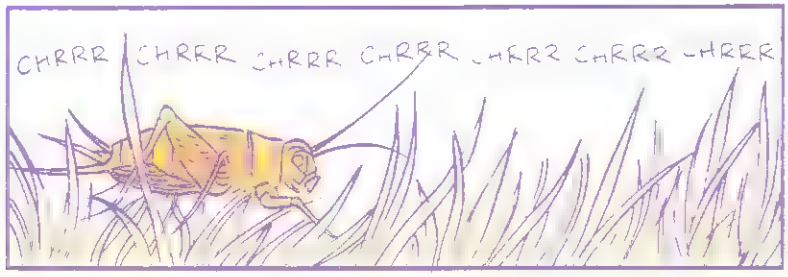


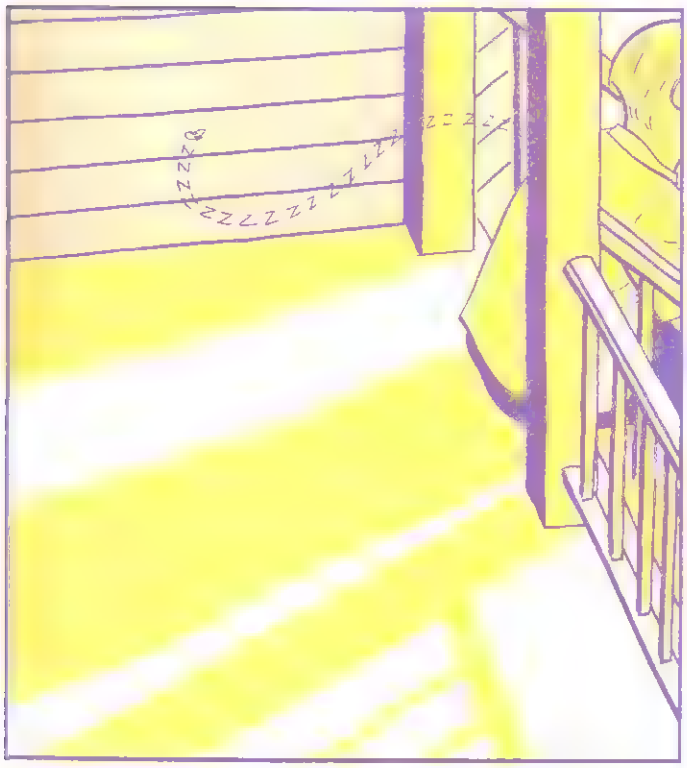



F-LUSH
SHSHSHSHH

CHRRR CHR R CH


R CHRRR R CHRRR CH


CHRRR CHRRR CHRRR CHRRR CHRRR CHRRR CHRRR

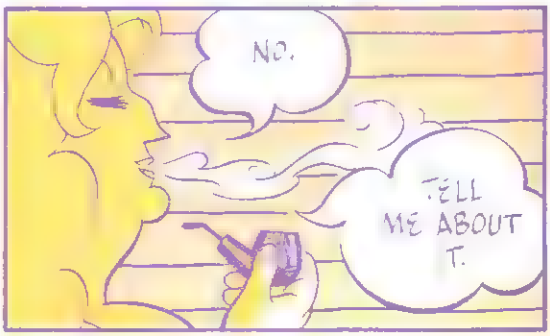


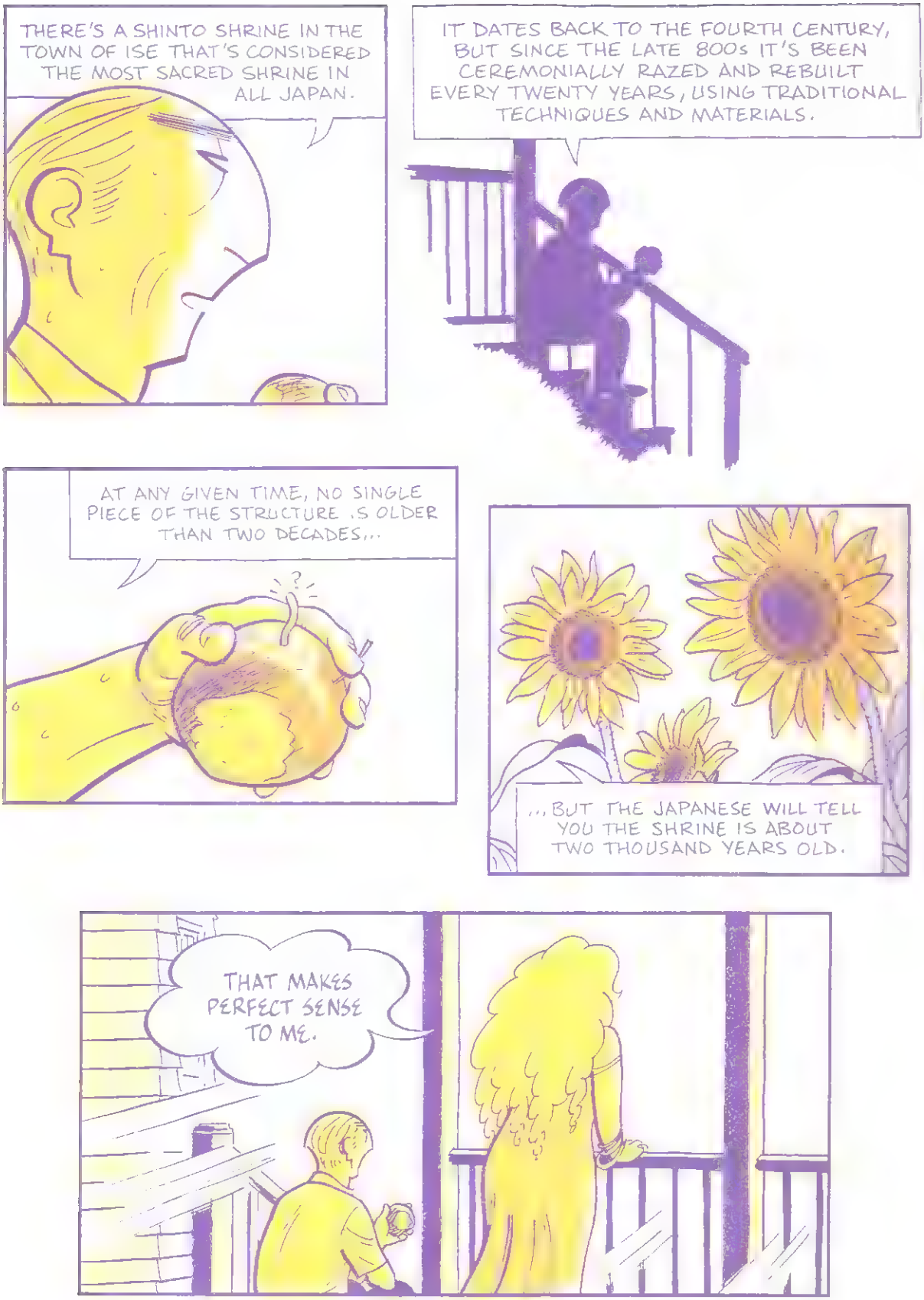
NICE WORK.

THAT'S THE FIRST HOUSE EVER BUILT.

WELL, THE WAY YOU HANDLED THOSE TOOLS, I SUSPECT YOU WERE A CARPENTER IN A PREVIOUS LIFE.

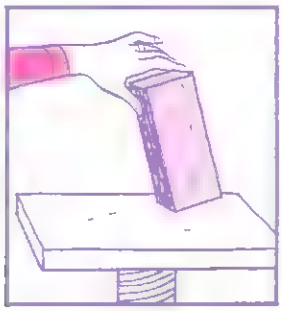
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF ISE SHRINE?

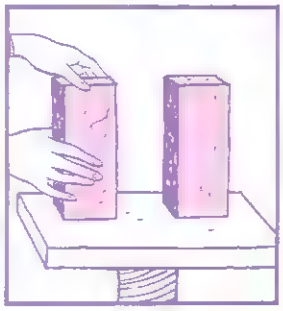

NO.
TELL ME ABOUT IT.

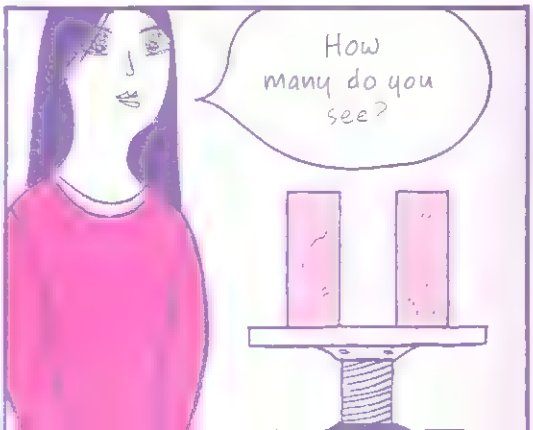

THERE'S A SHINTO SHRINE IN THE TOWN OF ISE THAT'S CONSIDERED THE MOST SACRED SHRINE IN ALL JAPAN.
IT DATES BACK TO THE FOURTH CENTURY, BUT SINCE THE LATE 800s IT'S BEEN CEREMONIALLY RAZED AND REBUILT EVERY TWENTY YEARS, USING TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS.
AT ANY GIVEN TIME, NO SINGLE PIECE OF THE STRUCTURE IS OLDER THAN TWO DECADES...
?
...BUT THE JAPANESE WILL TELL YOU THE SHRINE IS ABOUT TWO THOUSAND YEARS OLD.
THAT MAKES PERFECT SENSE TO ME.

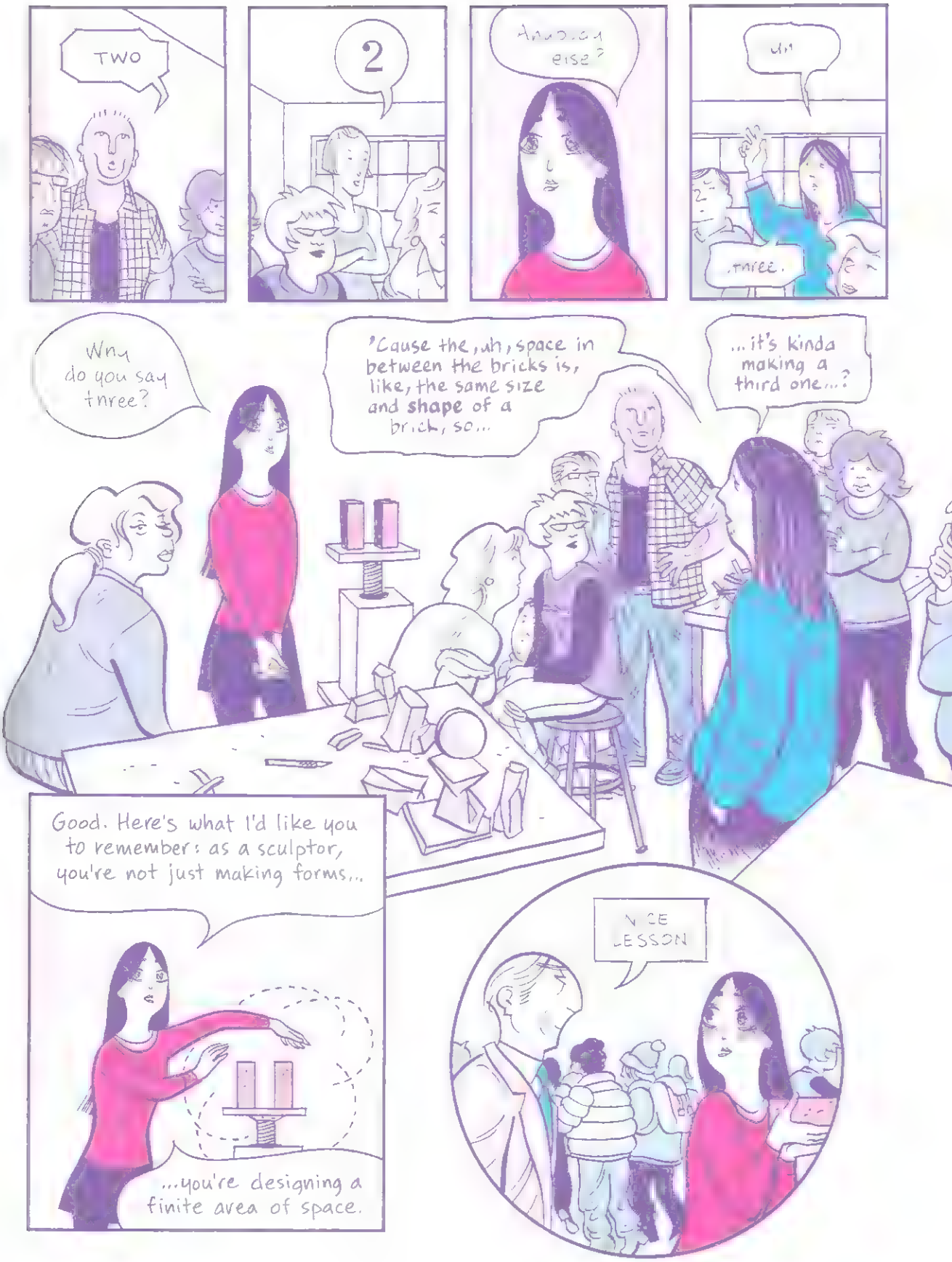
ONE OF THE THINGS ASTERIOS ADMIRED ABOUT HANA WAS THE WAY SHE ALWAYS LOOKED FOR THE GOOD IN PEOPLE.

IN FACT, HE WAS SOMETIMES CONVINCED SHE SAW GOOD THAT WASN'T THERE.





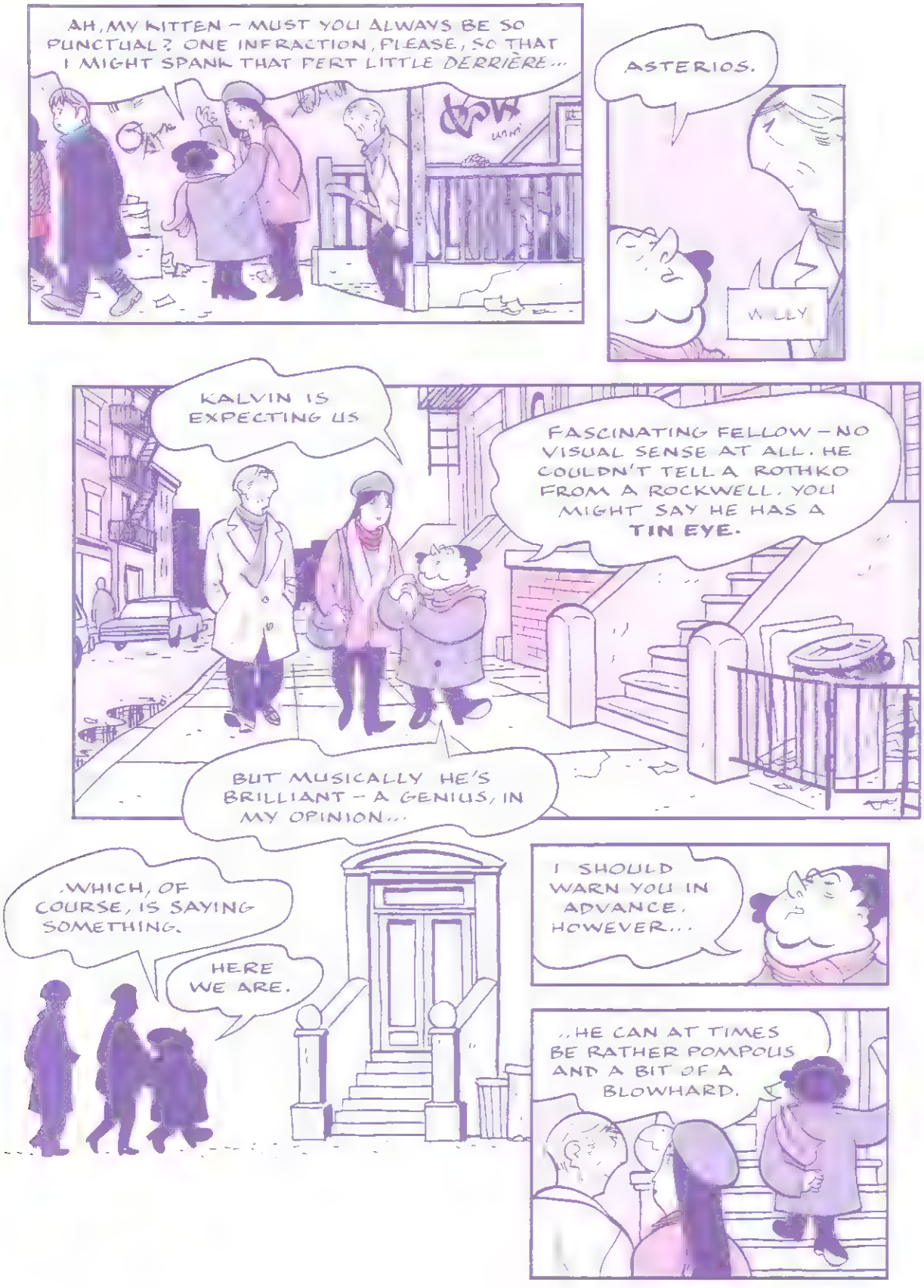



TWO
2
Anybody else?
uh
three.
Why do you say three?
'Cause the, uh, space in between the bricks is, like, the same size and **shape** of a brick, so...
...it's kinda making a third one...?
Good. Here's what I'd like you to remember: as a sculptor, you're not just making forms...
...you're designing a finite area of space.
NICE LESSON

PERHAPS HER INCLINATION TO GIVE PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT COMPLEMENTED HIS IMPATIENCE.

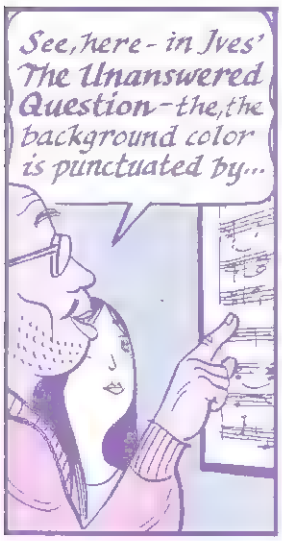
...NOW, *WHY* DO WE HAVE TO SEE WILLY CHIMERA AGAIN TOMORROW?

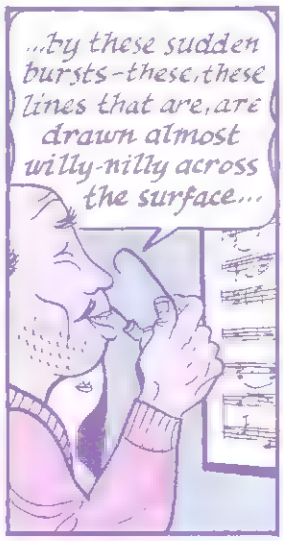
He wants me to meet the composer. You might find it interesting.

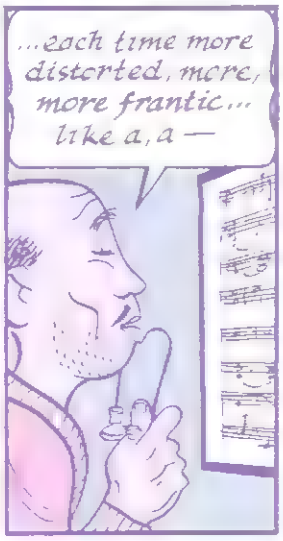

AH, MY KITTEN – MUST YOU ALWAYS BE SO PUNCTUAL? ONE INFRACTION, PLEASE, SO THAT I MIGHT SPANK THAT PERT LITTLE DERRIÈRE...
ASTERIOS.
WILLY
KALVIN IS EXPECTING US
FASCINATING FELLOW – NO VISUAL SENSE AT ALL. HE COULDN'T TELL A ROTHKO FROM A ROCKWELL. YOU MIGHT SAY HE HAS A TIN EYE.
BUT MUSICALLY HE'S BRILLIANT – A GENIUS, IN MY OPINION...
WHICH, OF COURSE, IS SAYING SOMETHING.
HERE WE ARE.
I SHOULD WARN YOU IN ADVANCE, HOWEVER...
..HE CAN AT TIMES BE RATHER POMPOUS AND A BIT OF A BLOWHARD.

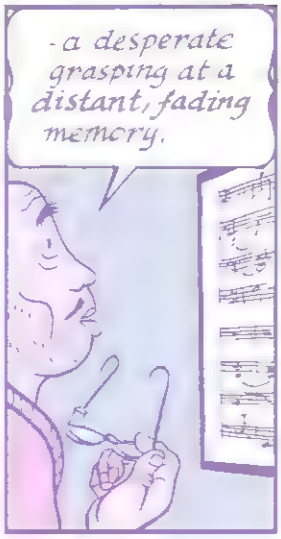
KALVIN KOHOUTEK, ASTERIOS WONDERED BRIEFLY IF THAT WAS NOT HIS GIVEN NAME.
A COMPOSER KNOWN FOR HIS ECLECTIC AND EXPERIMENTAL MUSICAL EXPLORATIONS, CALLED HIS STYLE OF LIVING "BOHEGEOIS."

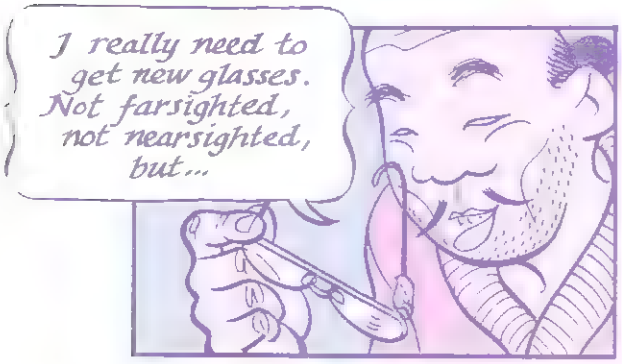
HIS WALLS WERE COVERED WITH TRANSCRIPTIONS OF PASSAGES FROM HIS FAVORITE COMPOSITIONS.

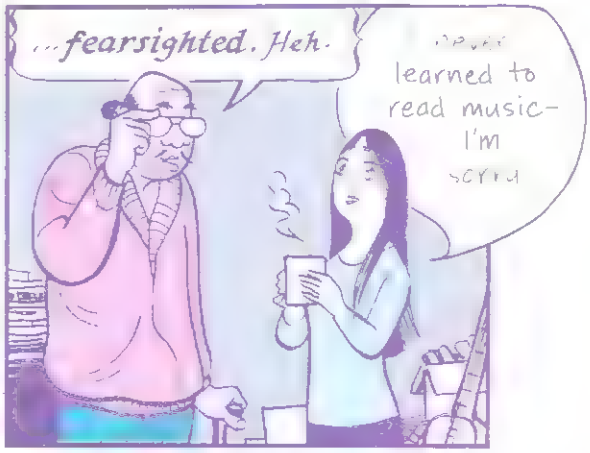






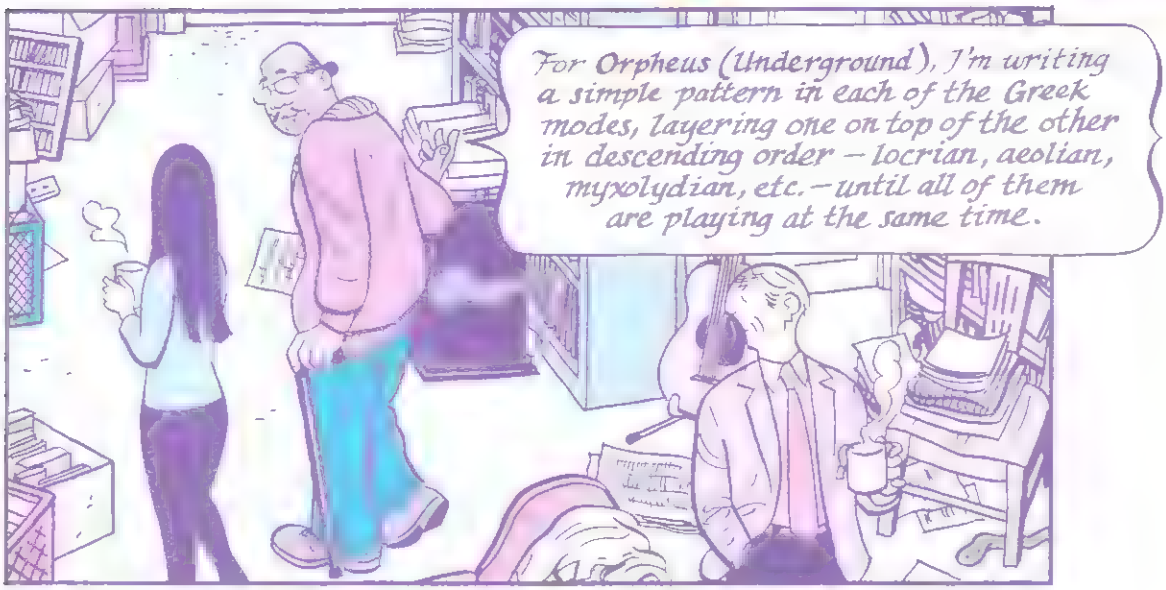






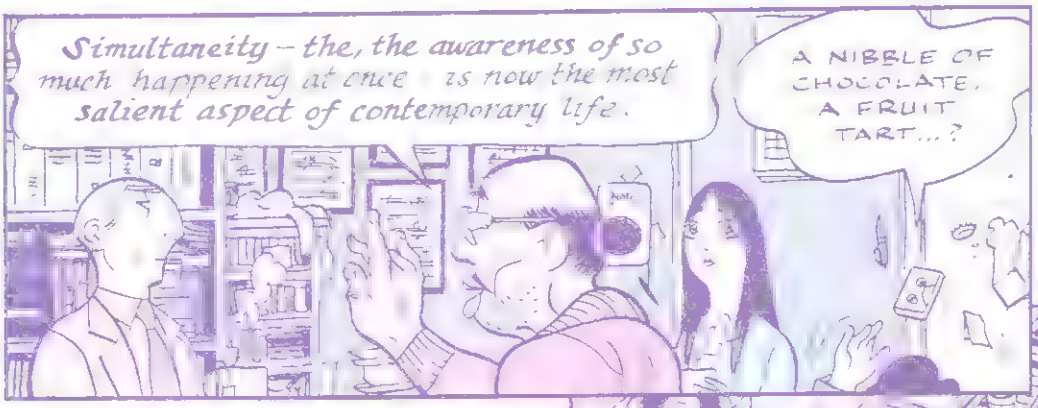
Actually, actually not, really. It's more like each page is a record of time passing in a certain way.

This one, for example, represents about thirteen seconds, while this one is about, about four and a half minutes.
Notes
NOW THAT IS INTERESTING...

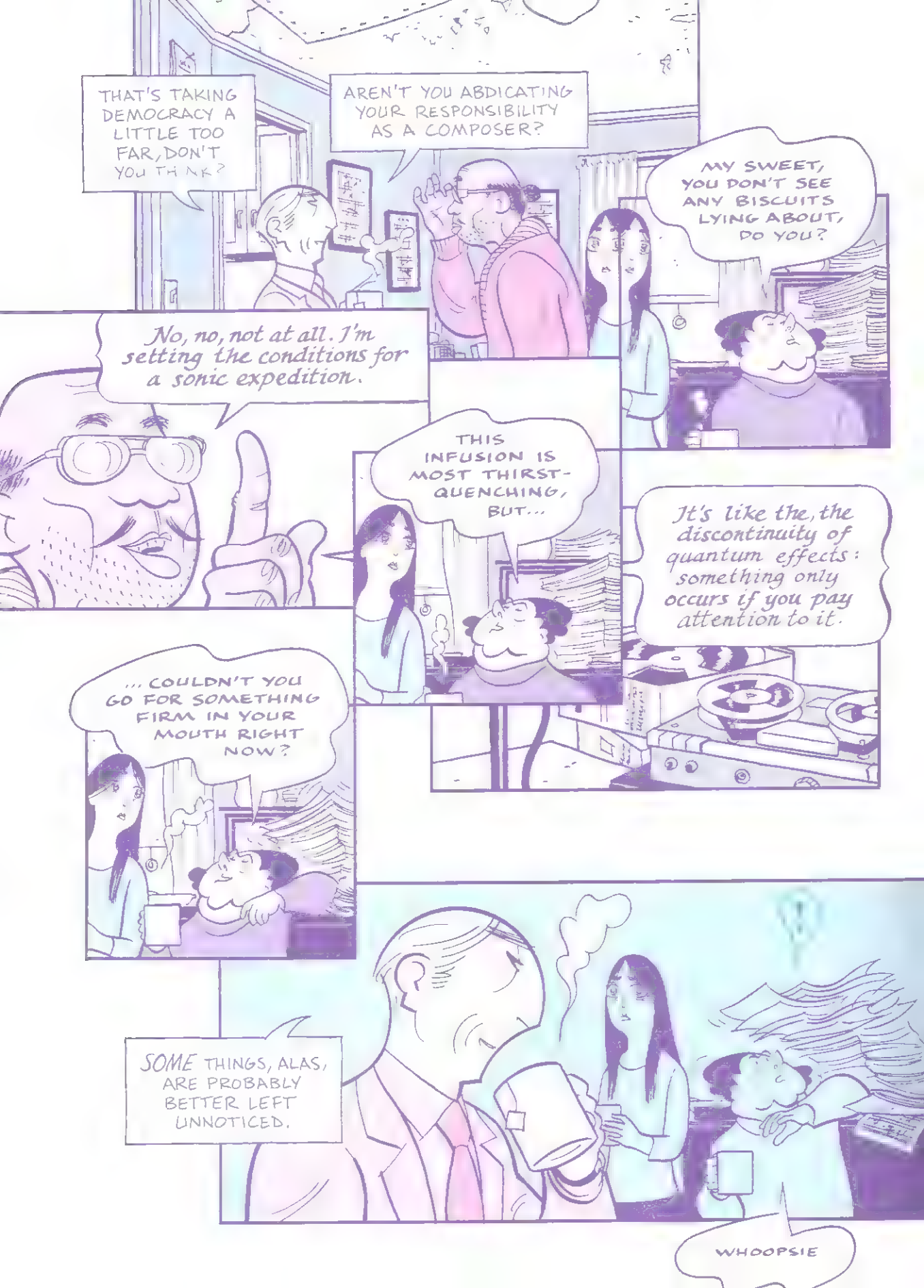

For Orpheus (Underground), I'm writing a simple pattern in each of the Greek modes, layering one on top of the other in descending order – locrian, aeolian, myxolydian, etc. – until all of them are playing at the same time.

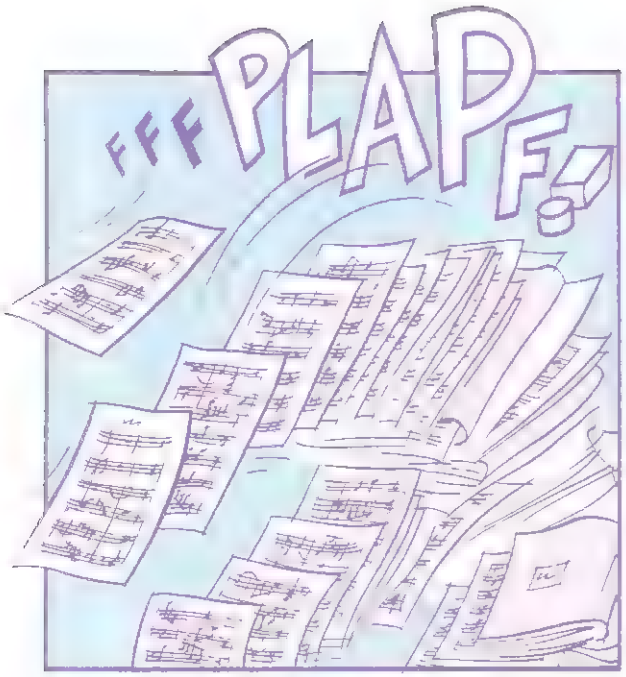
SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING ONE OF MY STUDENTS WOULD DREAM UP.
IT WILL BE LIKE PYTHAGORAS' MUSIC OF THE SPHERES!

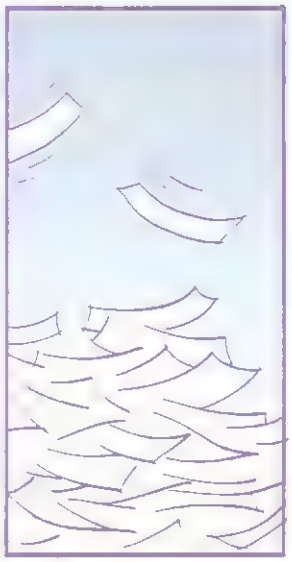
IT SEEMS TO ME MUSICAL COMPOSITION IS EITHER PRIMARILY RHYTHMIC OR PRIMARILY MELODIC.
Well not, not necessarily. It could be about tonal resonance, or the texture of sound within, within waves or cycles...
YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE SOMETHING TO GO WITH THIS EXCELLENT TEA, LIKE A BIT OF CAKE...?


Simultaneity – the, the awareness of so much happening at once – is now the most salient aspect of contemporary life.
A NIBBLE OF CHOCOLATE, A FRUIT TART...?

In a cacophony of information, each listener by focusing on certain tones and phrases, can become an active participant in creating a unique unique polyphonic experience.
A SCONE? SOME PETITS FOURS?


THAT'S TAKING DEMOCRACY A LITTLE TOO FAR, DON'T YOU THINK?
AREN'T YOU ABDICATING YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A COMPOSER?
MY SWEET, YOU DON'T SEE ANY BISCUITS LYING ABOUT, DO YOU?
No, no, not at all. I'm setting the conditions for a sonic expedition.
THIS INFUSION IS MOST THIRST-QUENCHING, BUT...
It's like the, the discontinuity of quantum effects: something only occurs if you pay attention to it.
... COULDN'T YOU GO FOR SOMETHING FIRM IN YOUR MOUTH RIGHT NOW?
SOME THINGS, ALAS, ARE PROBABLY BETTER LEFT UNNOTICED.
WHOOPSIE

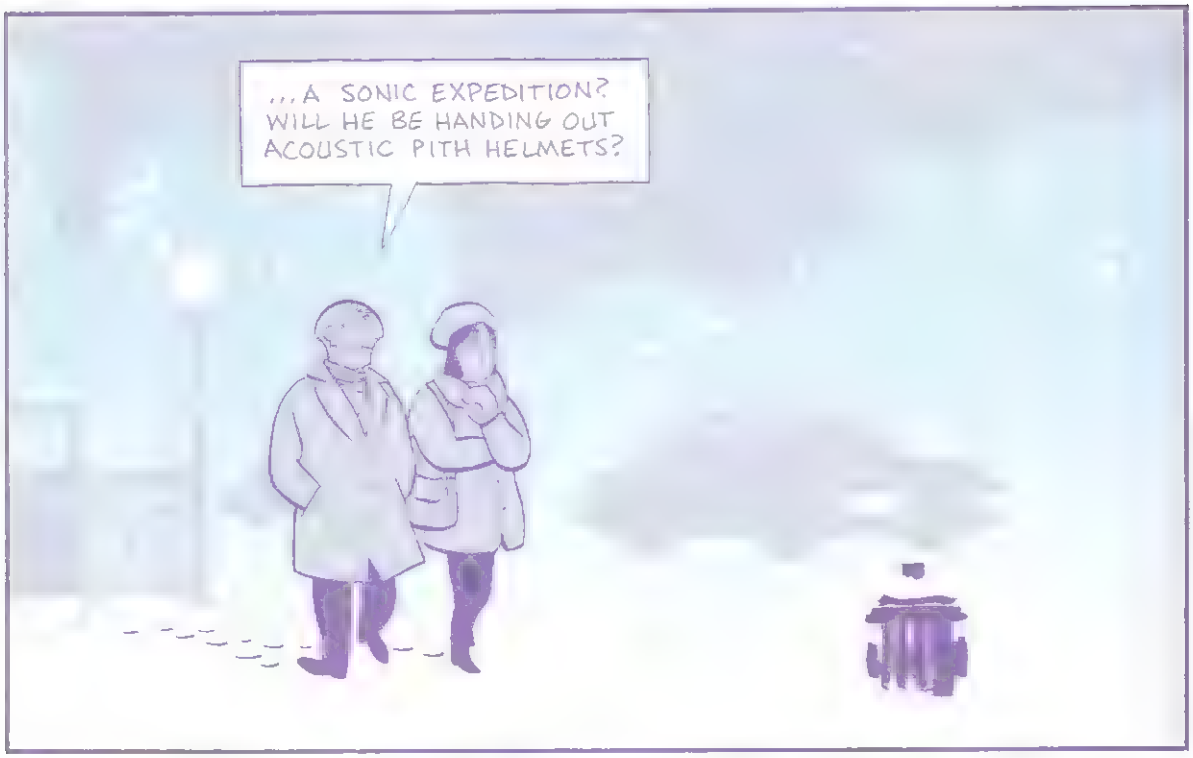

FFF PLAP F!

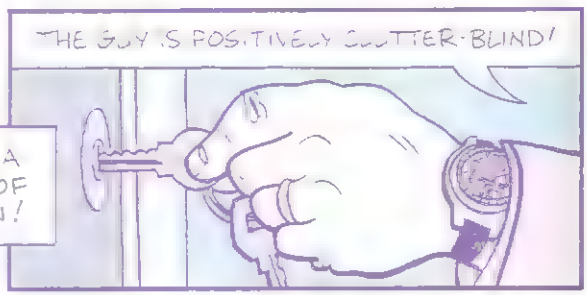


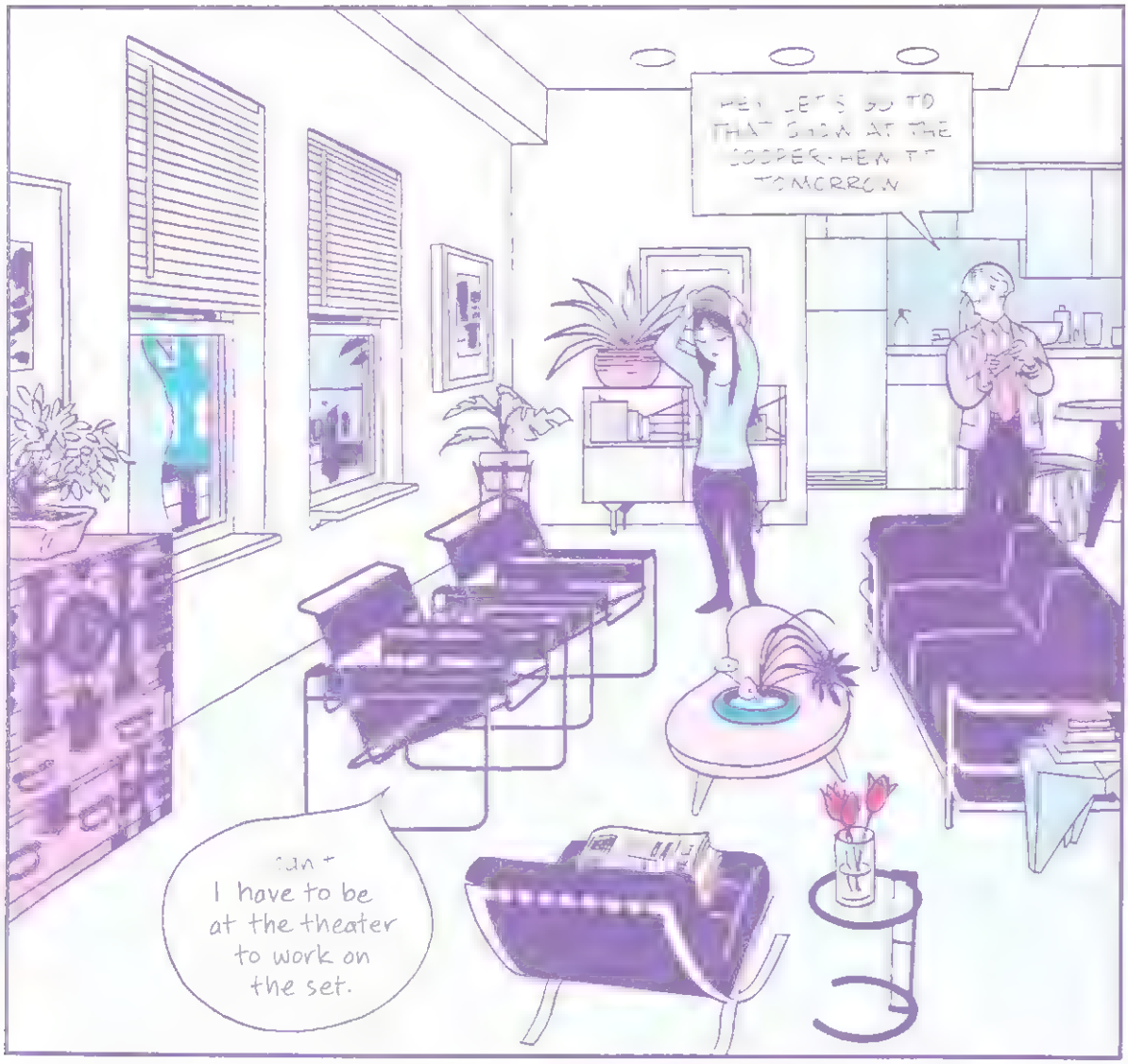
YOU REALLY SHOULD DEVISE A BETTER SYSTEM OF ORGANIZATION, KALVIN.

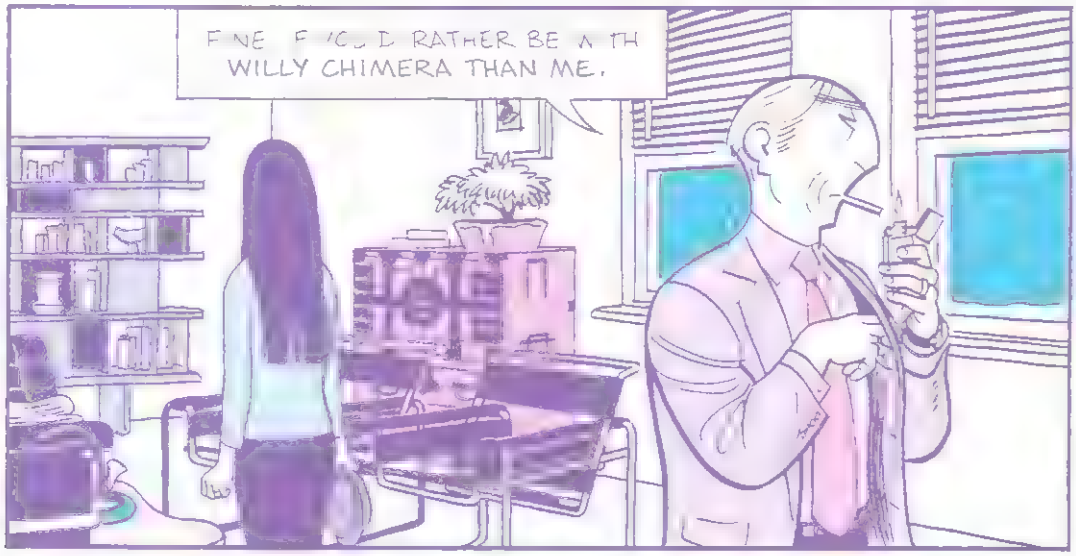
WILLY, I BELIEVE YOU'VE COME UP WITH A NEW COMPOSING TECHNIQUE!

ASTERIOS CAN'T RECALL IF HANA HAD ANYTHING TO SAY ON THE WAY HOME. HE WAS TOO BUSY THINKING UP NEW REJOINDERS TO KOHOUTEK'S COMMENTS.





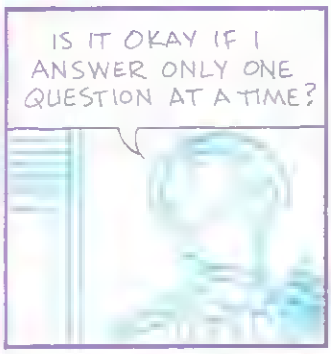

I have to be at the theater to work on the set.

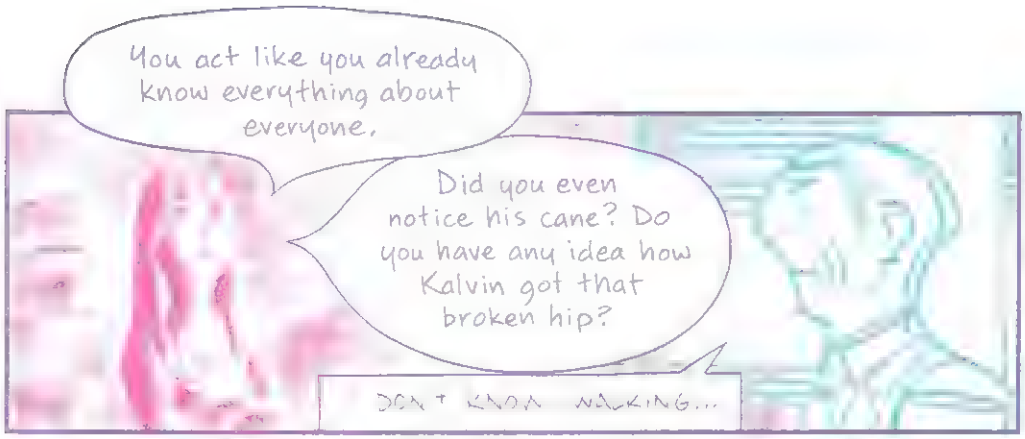

WILLY CHIMERA THAN ME.

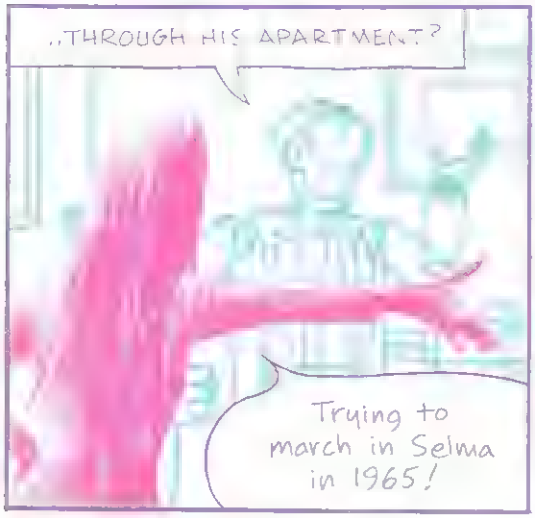
Can't you ever have a conversation that isn't about
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO

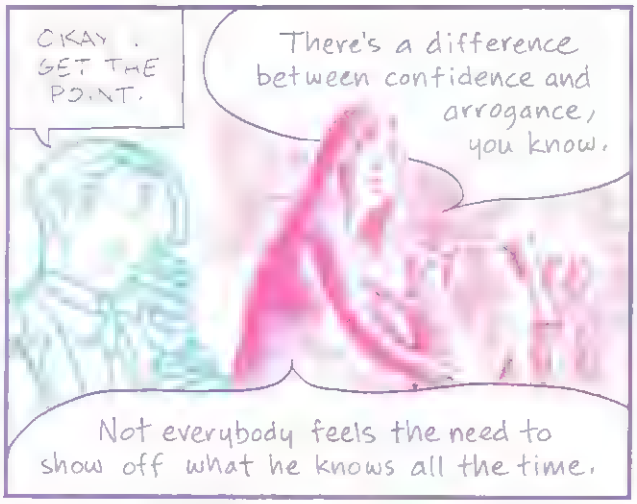
Suddenly you're an expert on music? Couldn't it be possible that maybe — **maybe** — Kalvin knows more about it than you?

What makes you think you're always right?


IS IT OKAY IF I ANSWER ONLY ONE QUESTION AT A TIME?


You act like you already know everything about everyone.
Did you even notice his cane? Do you have any idea how Kalvin got that broken hip?
DON'T KNOW. WALKING...


..THROUGH HIS APARTMENT?
Trying to march in Selma in 1965!


OKAY. GET THE POINT.
There's a difference between confidence and arrogance, you know.
Not everybody feels the need to show off what he knows all the time.

A person might have strengths or talents that aren't obvious right away— especially if he's being drowned out by someone barreling over him.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE GETTING SO ANGRY.
AND BY THE WAY THAT'S A MIXED METAPHOR.

You see? You hear words, but you don't know how to listen!

Just because somebody's quiet doesn't mean he doesn't have an opinion!

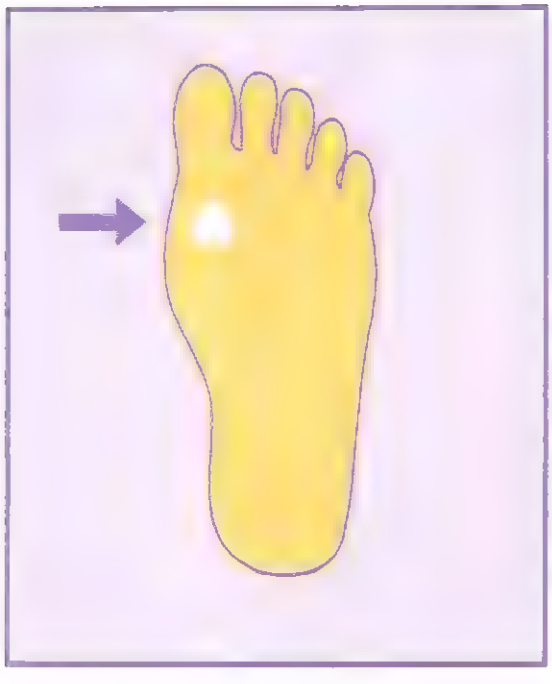
Just because somebody seems shy doesn't mean he doesn't exist!

Maybe all that person wants once in a while...

...is a little recognition...

WAIT A MINUTE – WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

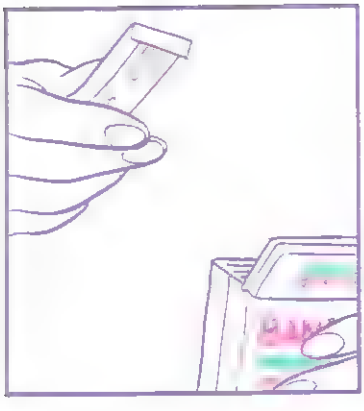
MMRRAO?

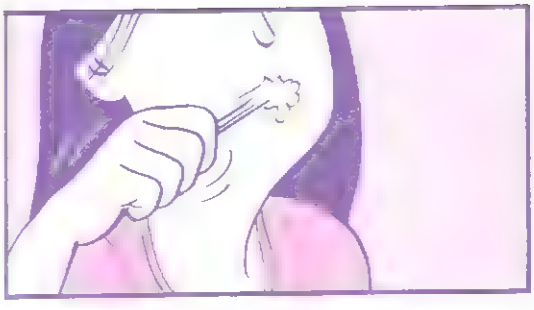


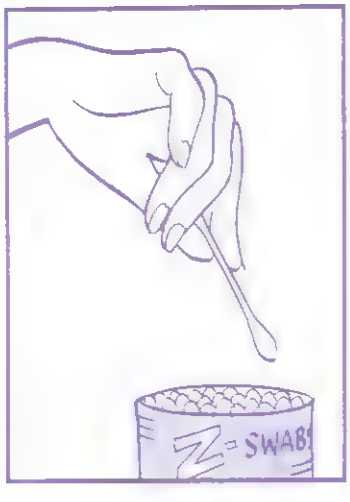
I HAVE A BLISTER ON MY FOOT.

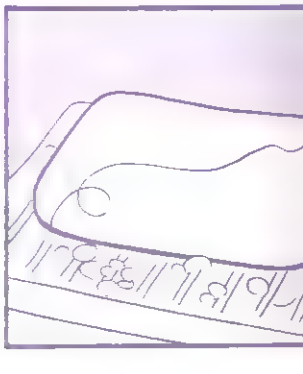
I HAVE A BLISTER ON MY FOOT.

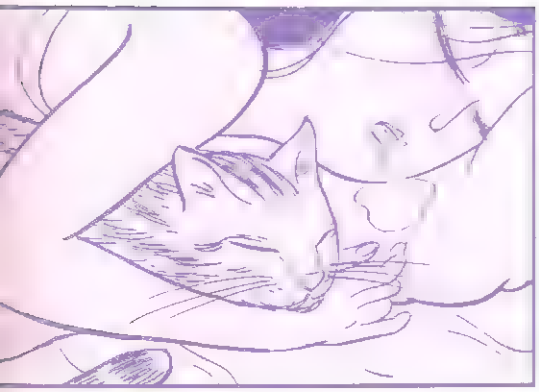
'Essence of sneeness' strikes again?



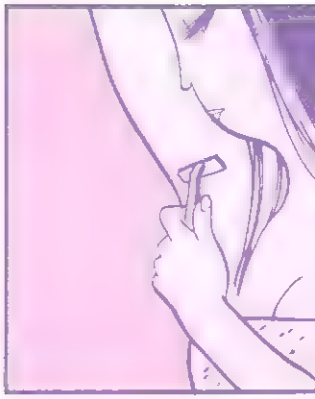



SWAB



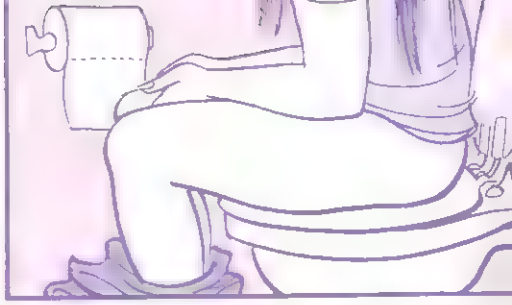


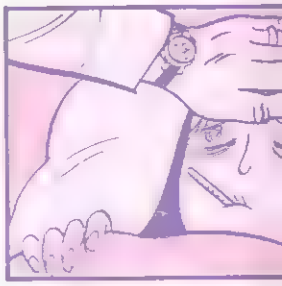
CLIP

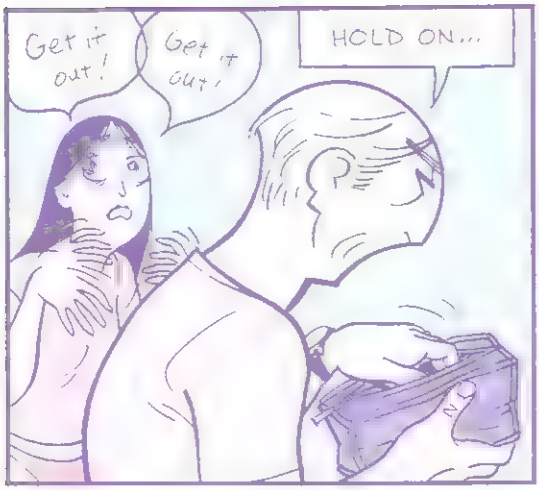


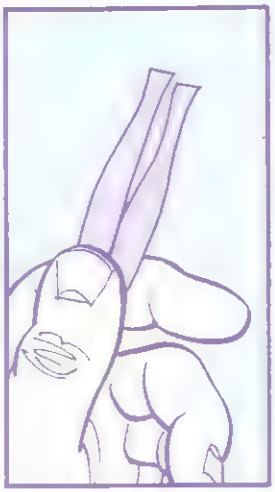
WHAT?

SSSLURP!

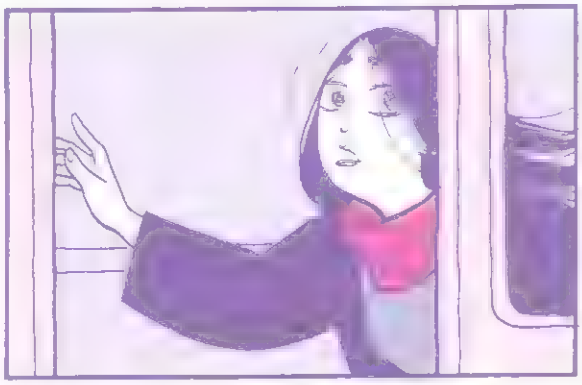




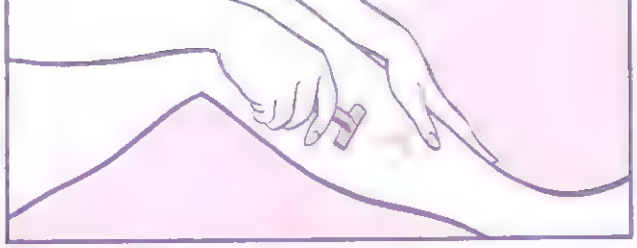

Get it out!
Get it out!
HOLD ON...

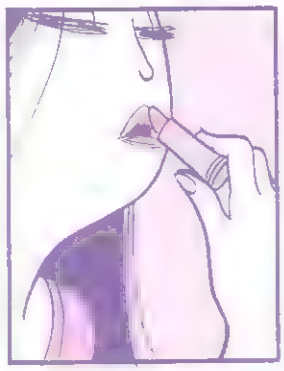


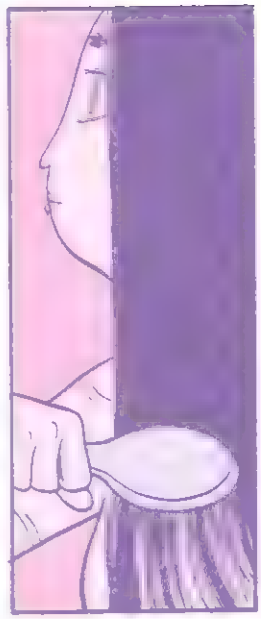
NATA MINUTE...
Hurry!

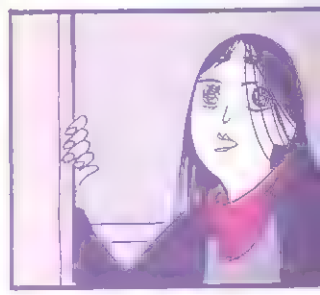


BLOW
POP
FFART
...WHERE'S THAT THING YOU FOUND TODAY?
CHU
HURL





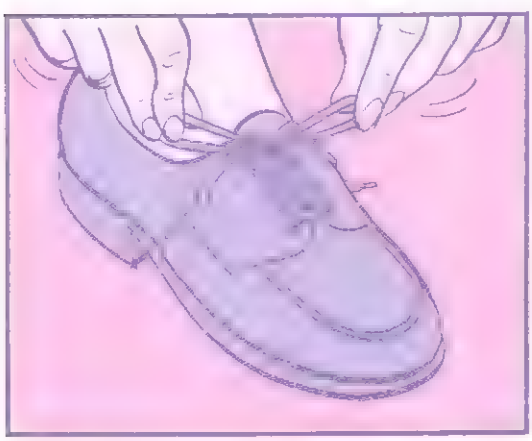


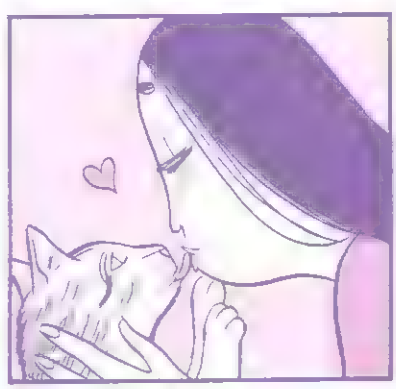


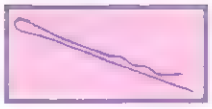
OKAY HOLD STILL...

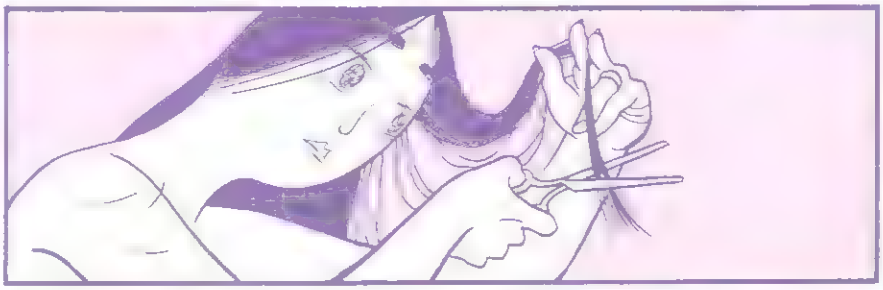
Wait - wait - Be careful!

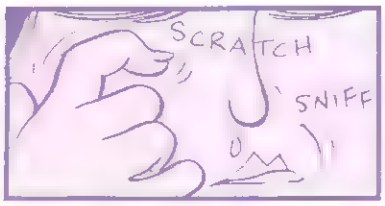
TRUST ME?

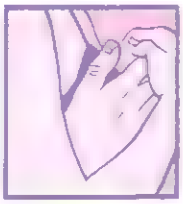


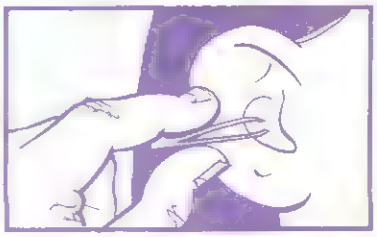


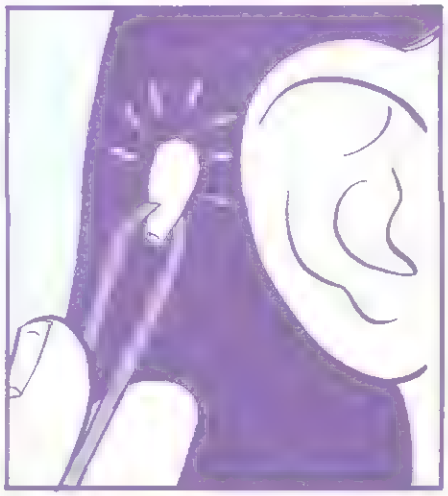
SNIFF
SNIFF


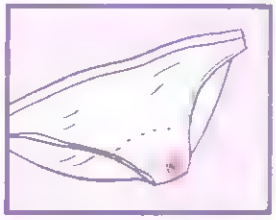
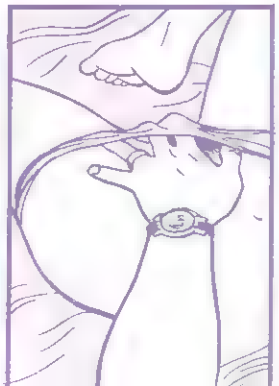


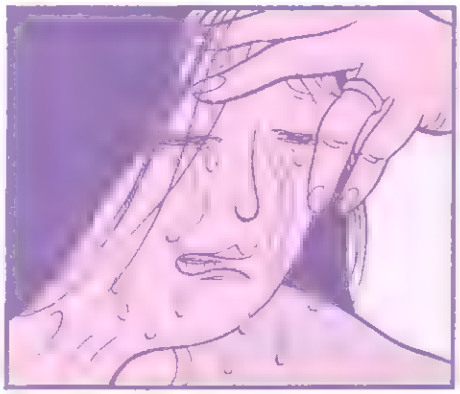
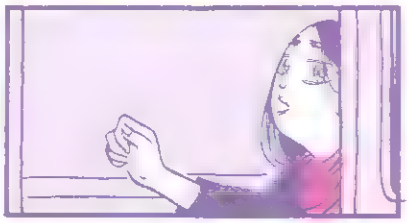

SCRATCH
SNIFF

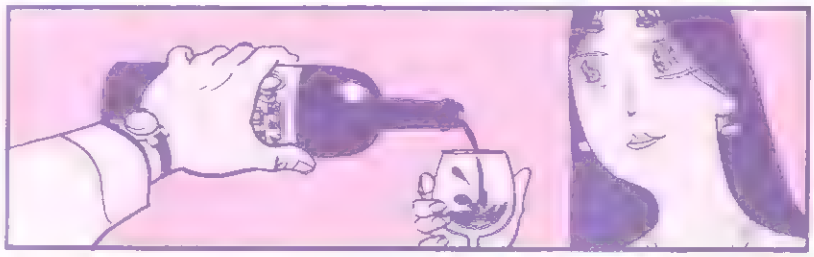




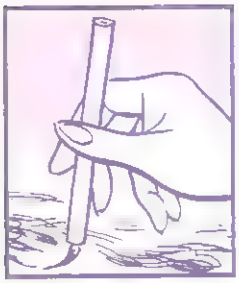


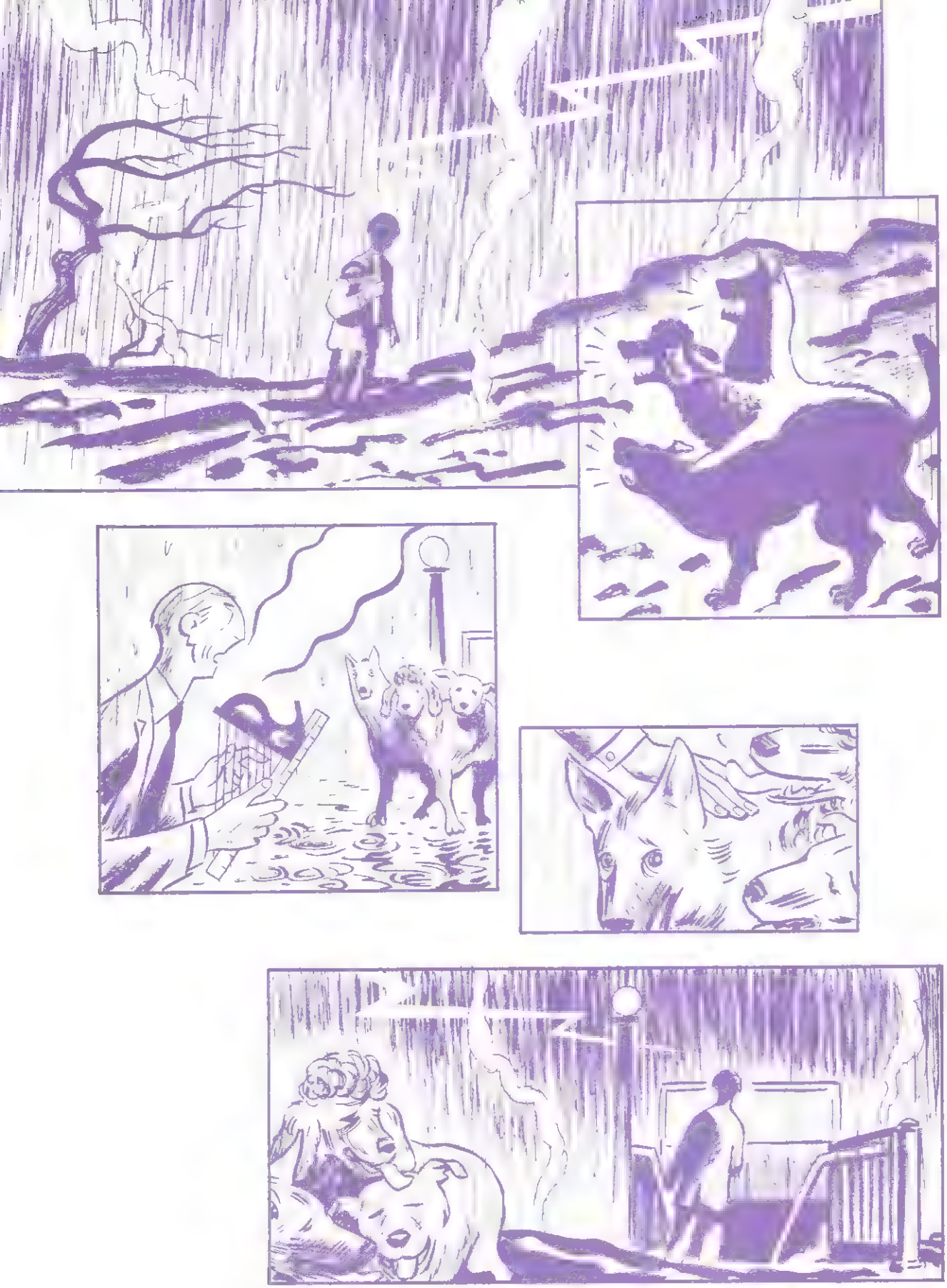



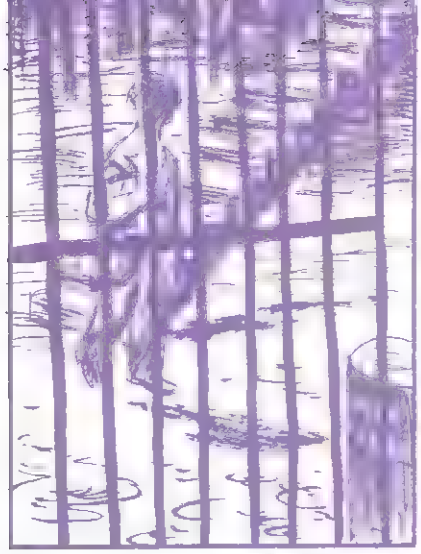


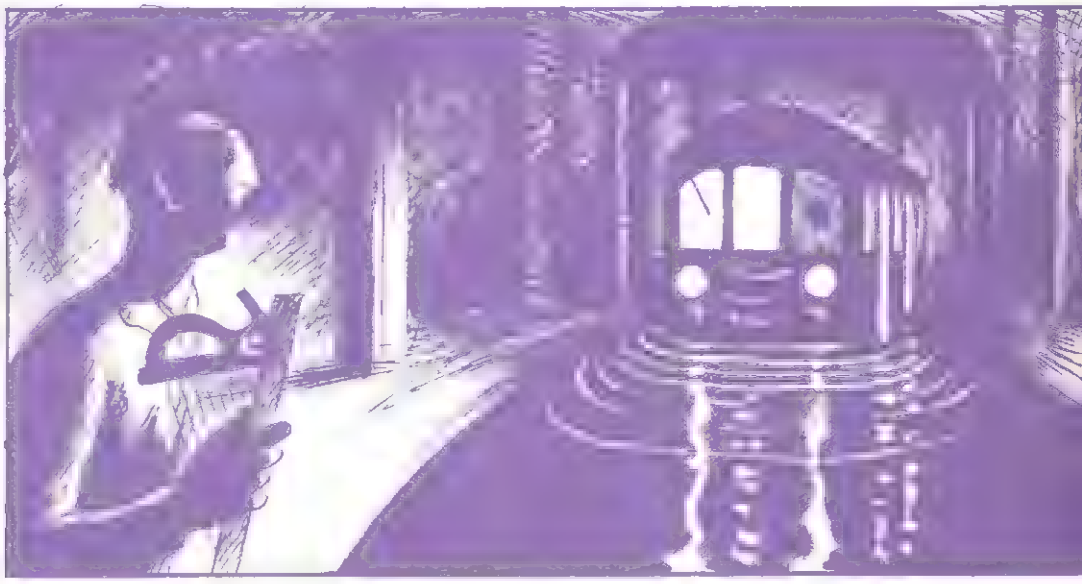
COUGH
KA-HOFF

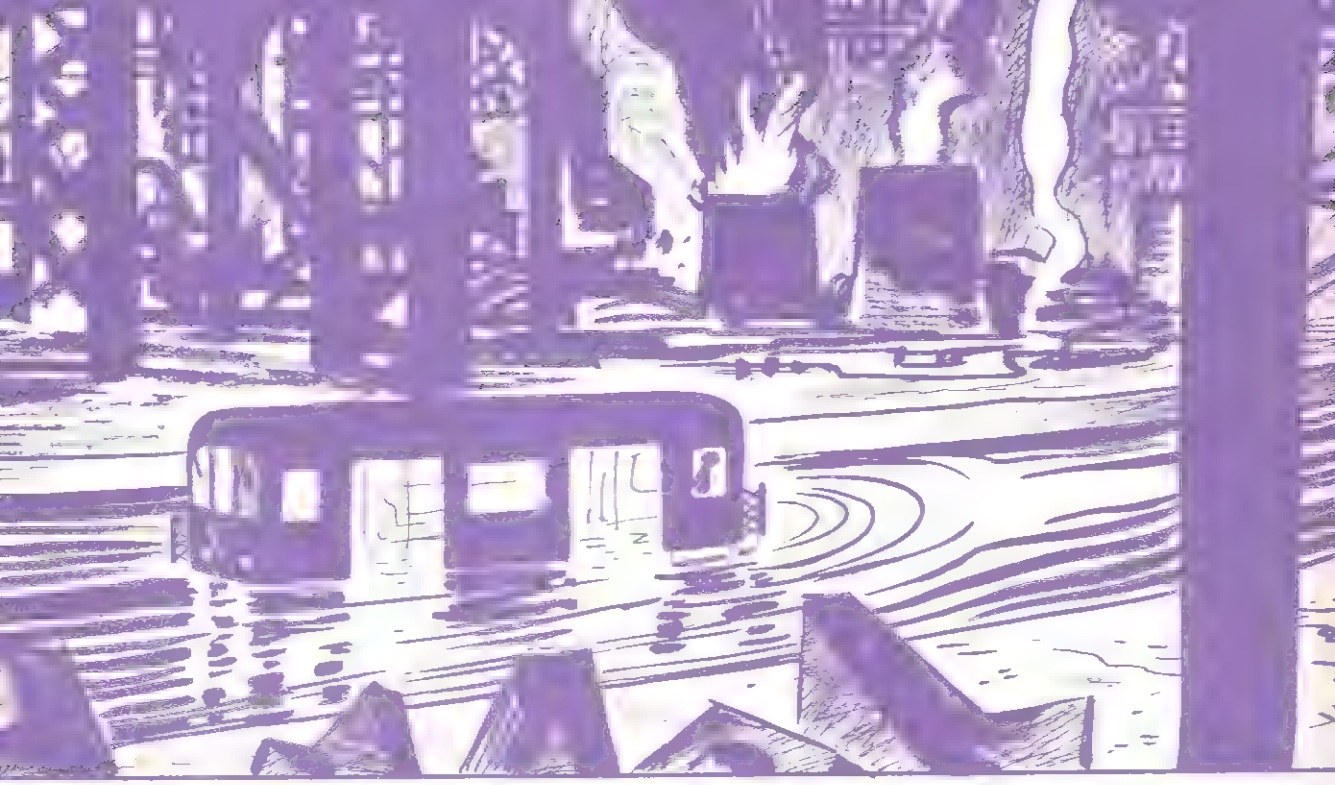


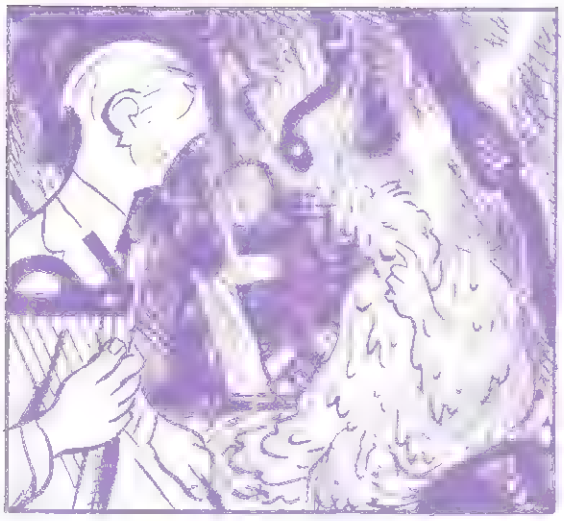
That's the last time I buy that pseudo-somebody brand!
TOSS

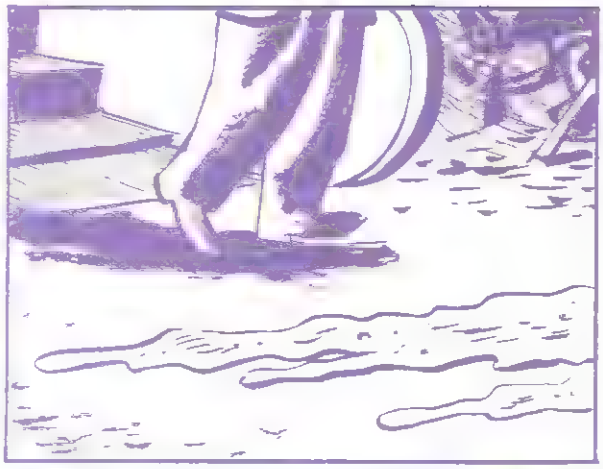


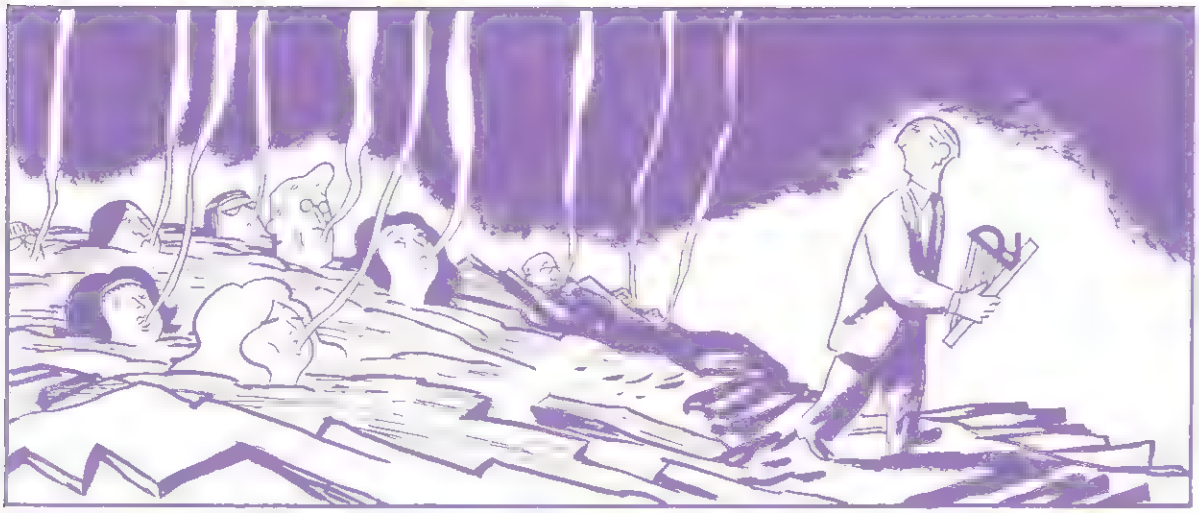


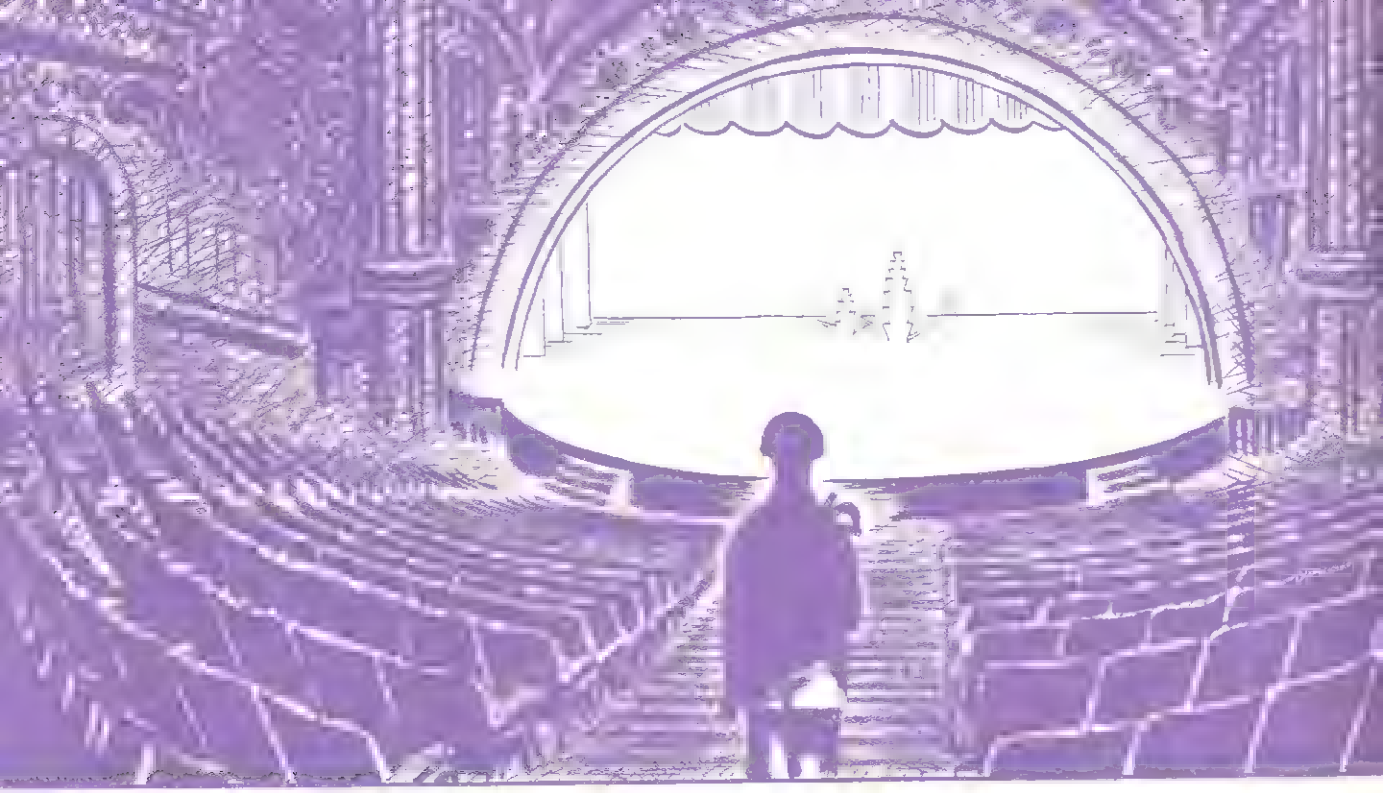


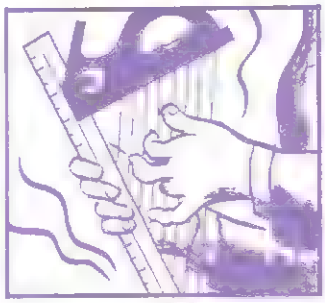


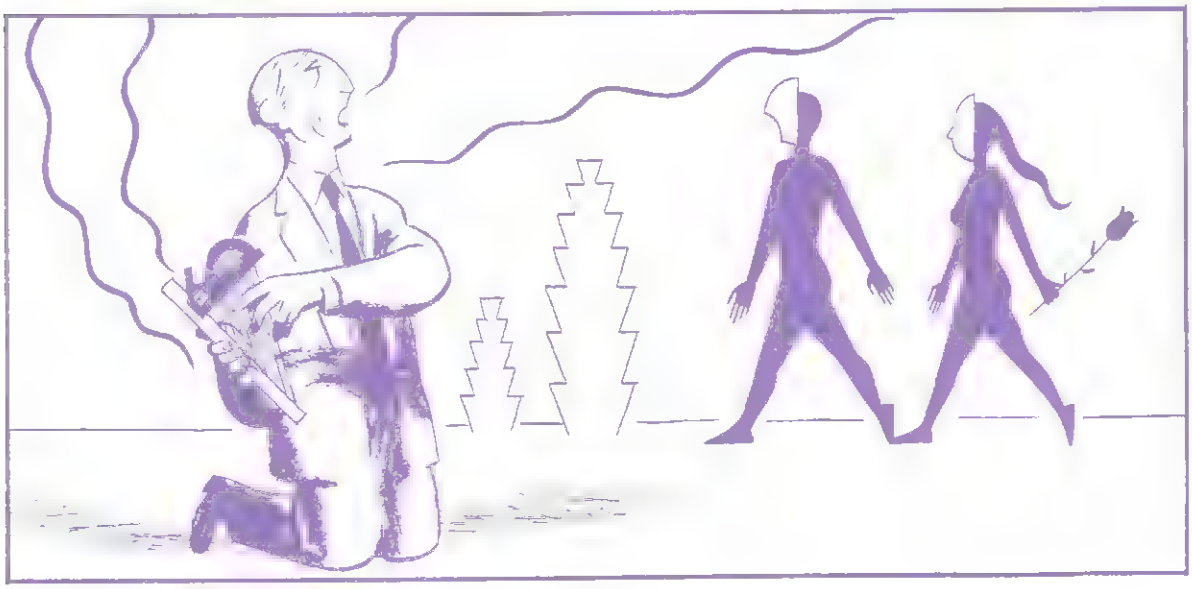


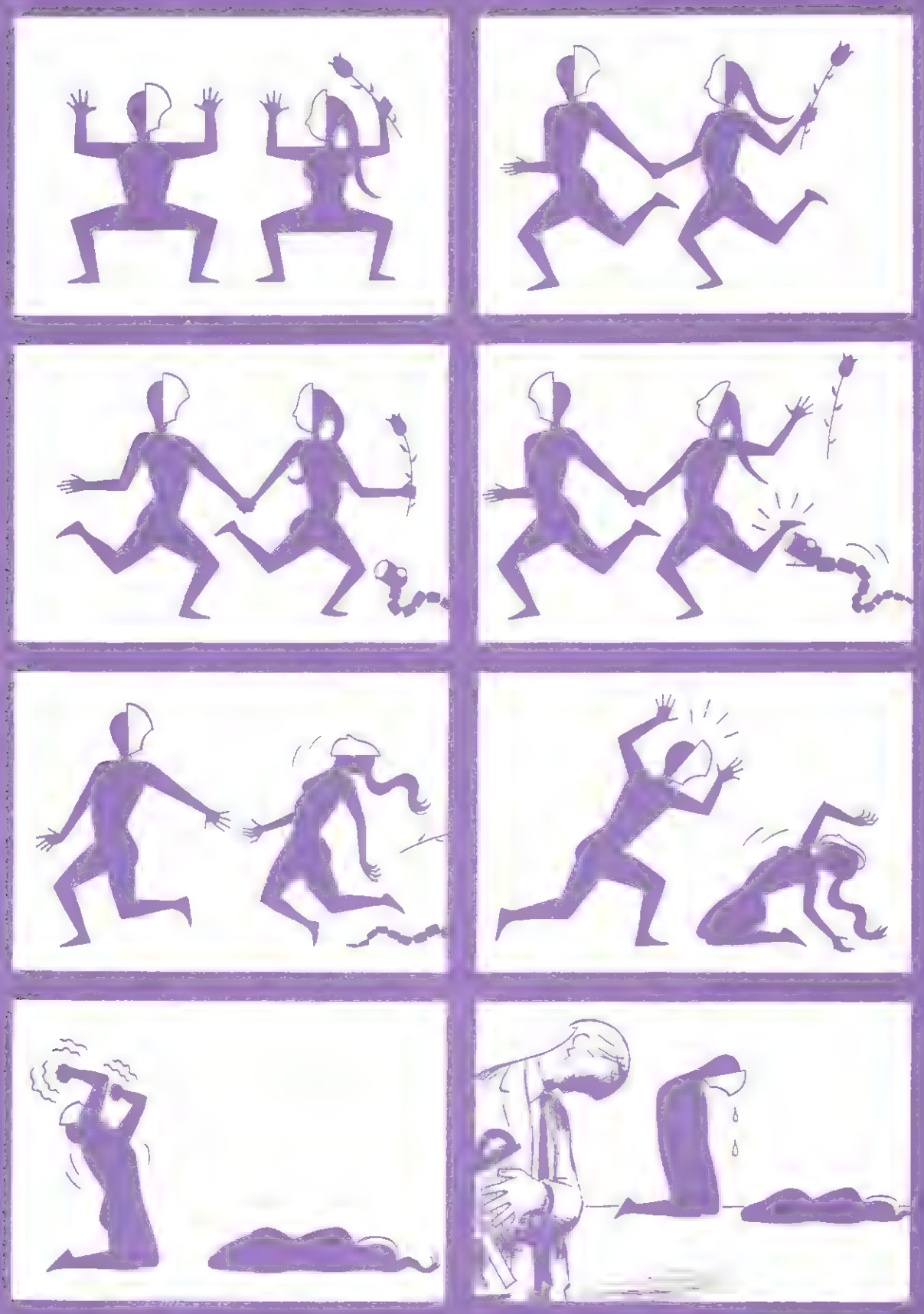


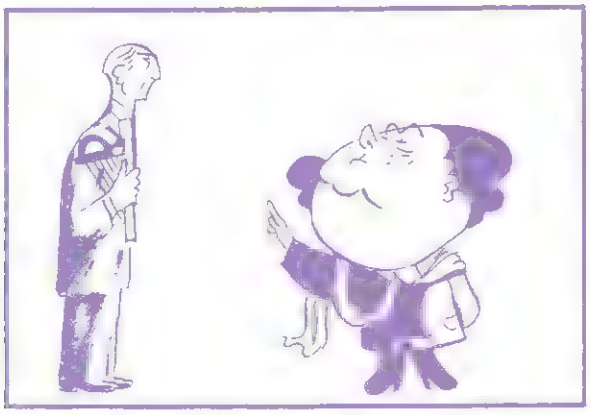


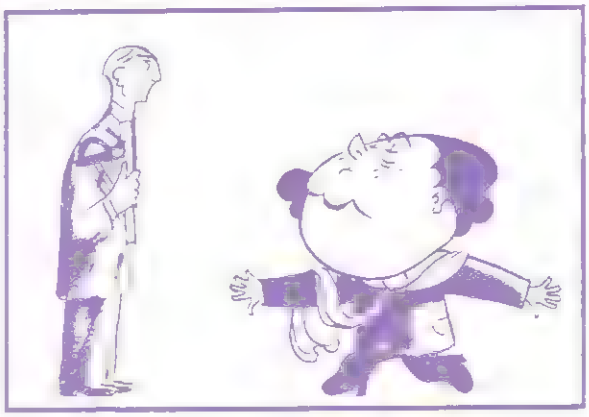


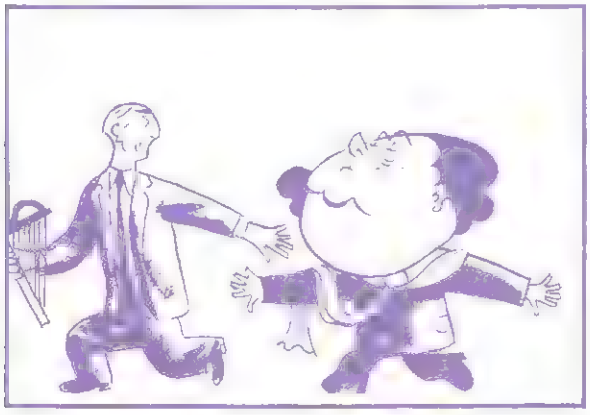


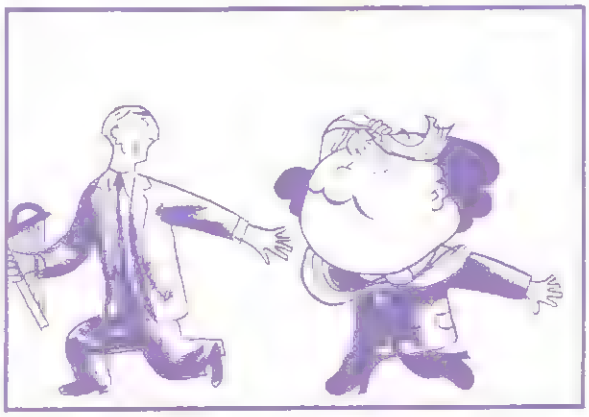


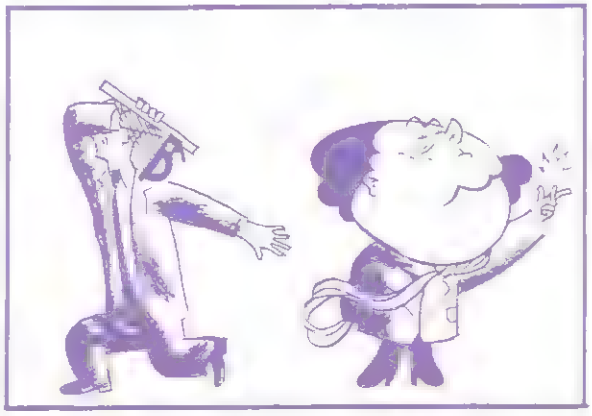


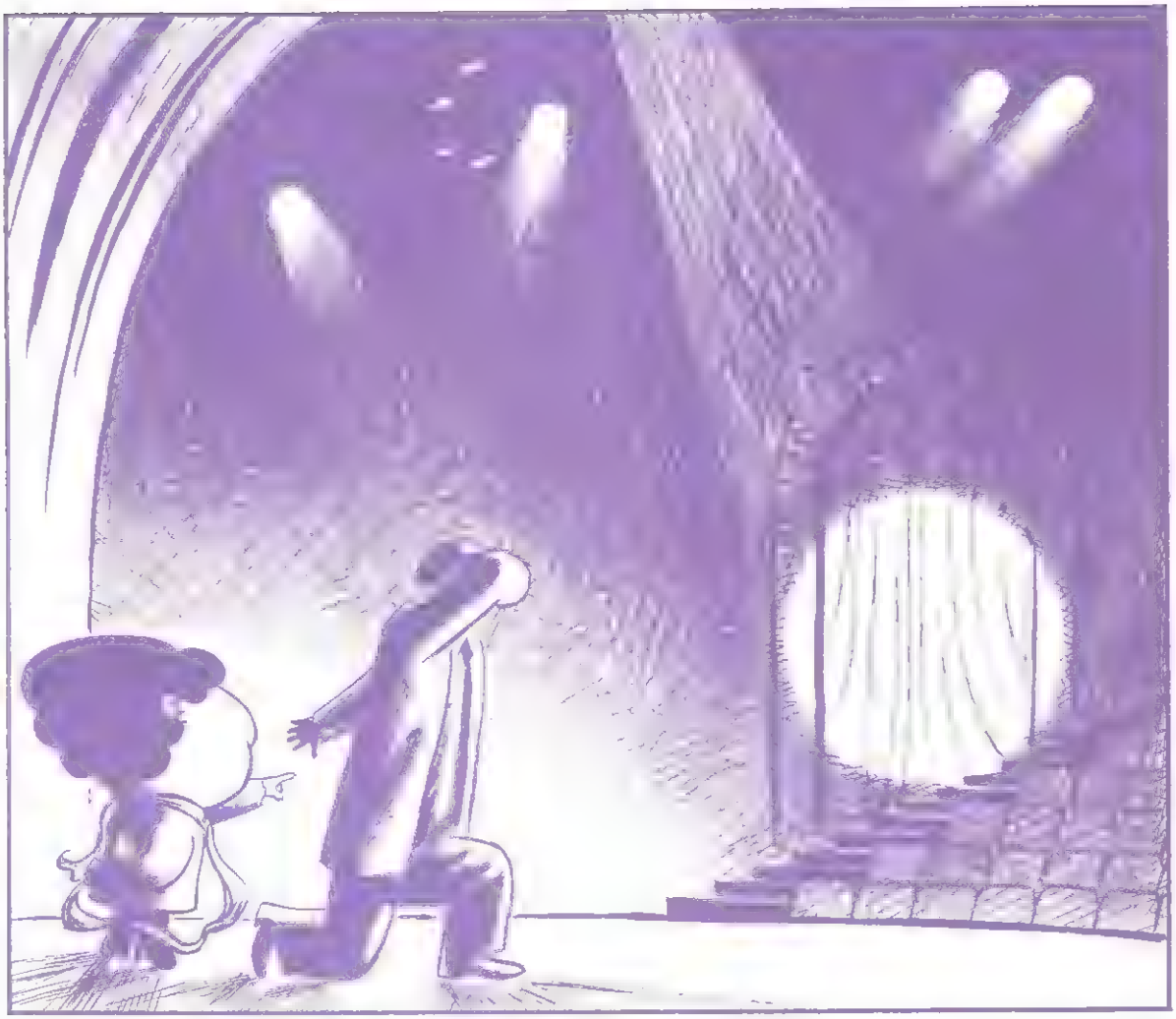


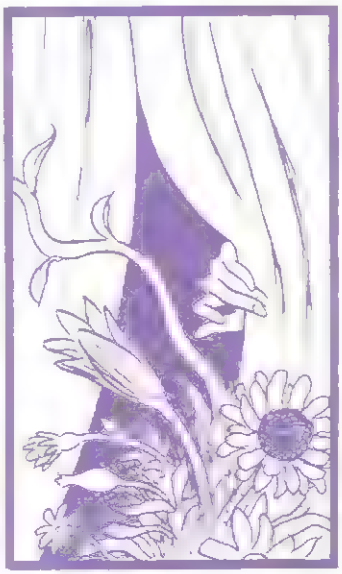


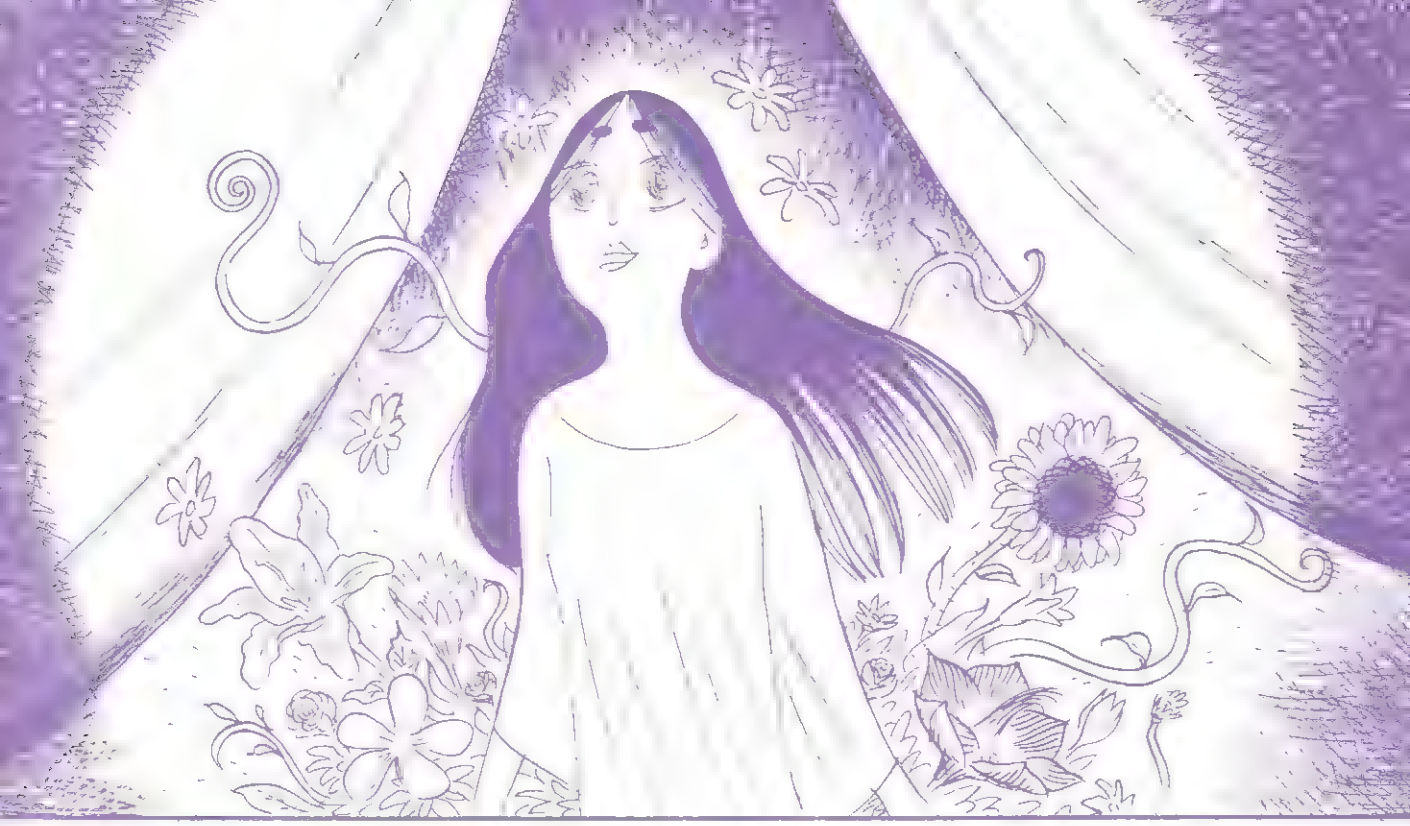


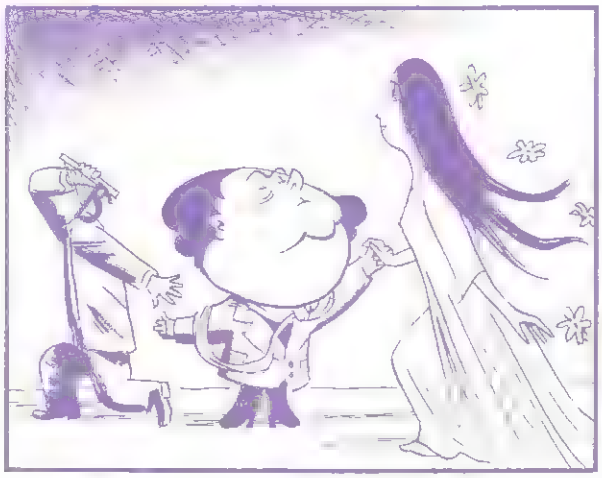


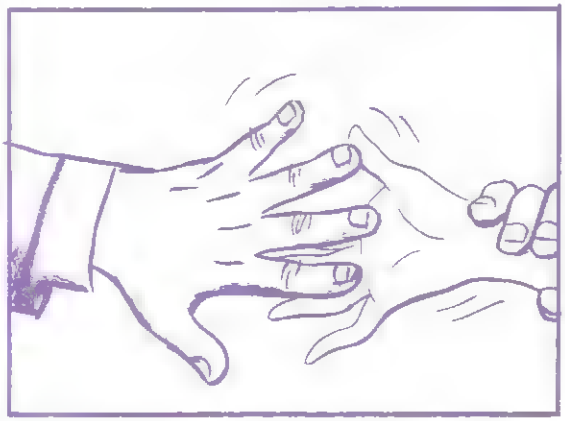


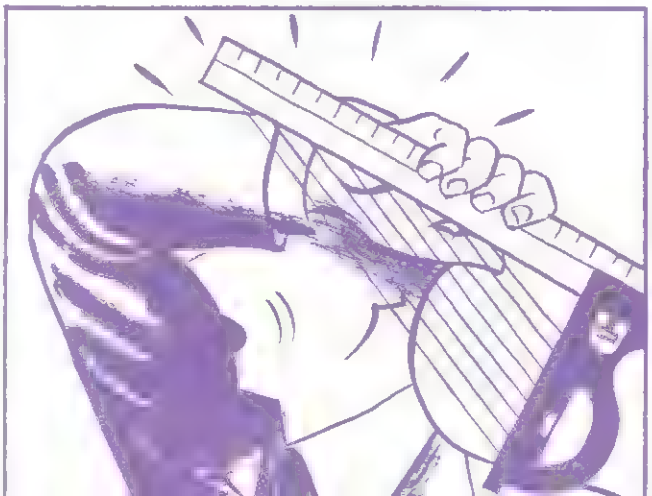


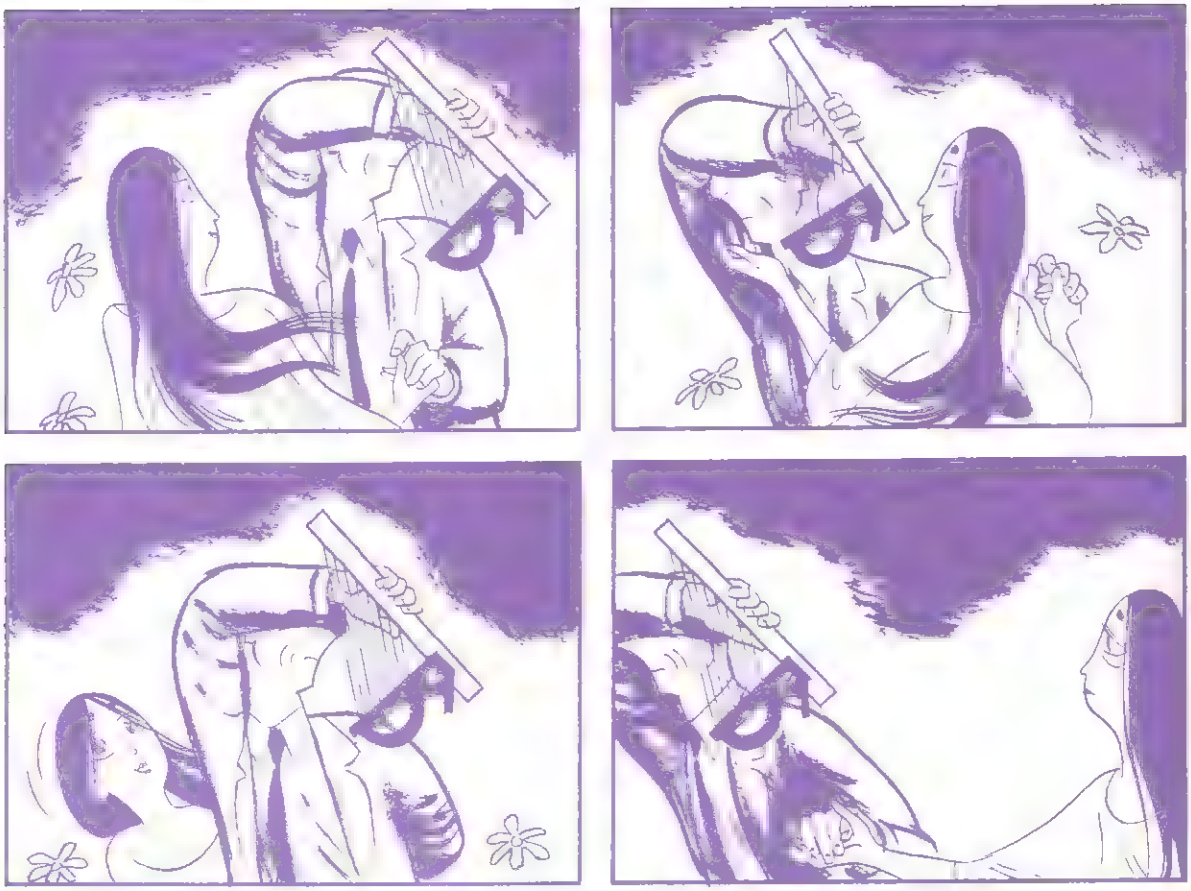


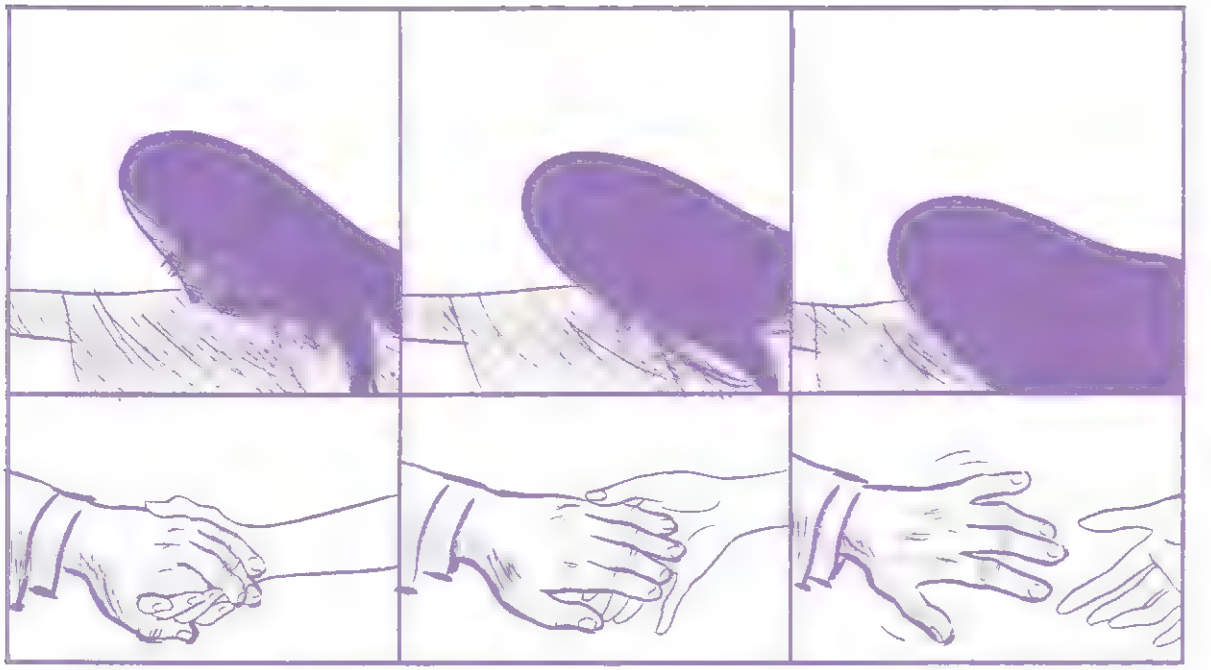


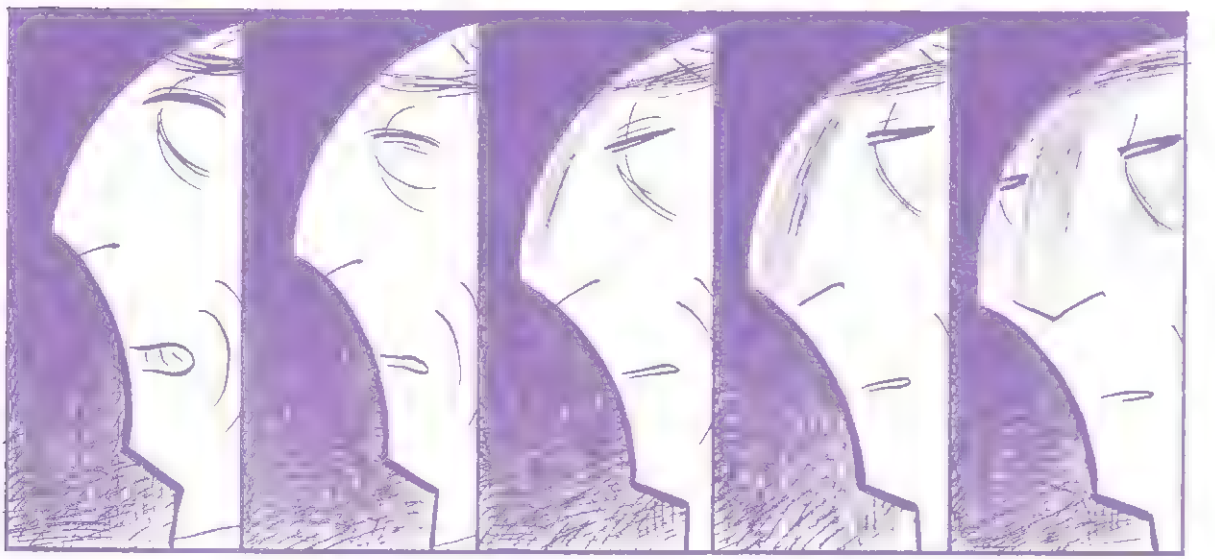








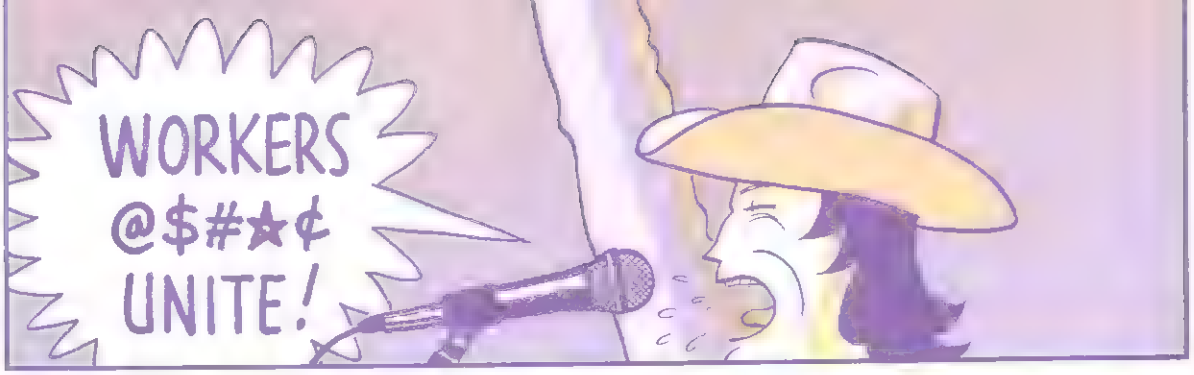


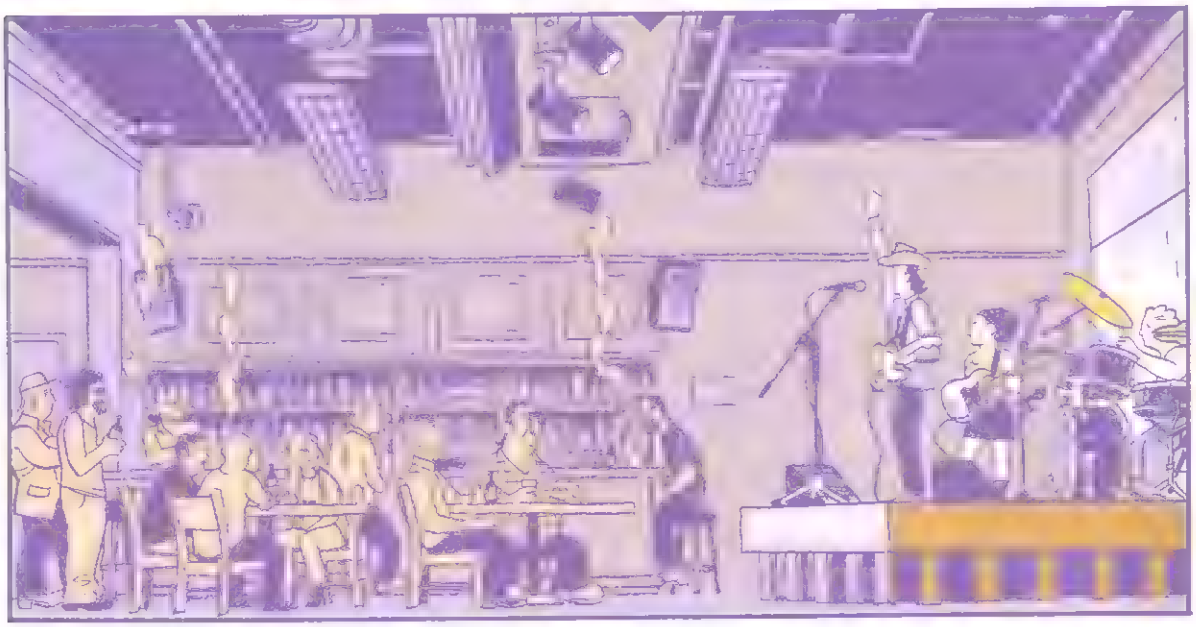


ONE-EYED JACK'S
LIVE MUSIC
TONIGHT
Celtic Shelter
10:00
9:00
The RUDNICKS

HEY, THANKS FOR COMIN' OUT, DUDE.
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS, RIGHT?
IF BY NUMBERS YOU MEAN THE SUM OF EVERYONE'S AGE...
How's a dead man gonna move that boulder?
THEN I'M HERE TO HELP.
WHERE'S URSULA?
She couldn't make it.
He started with the chip upon his shoulder
NOT SMOKY ENOUGH FOR HER
Aw, you know, ever since we had Jackson, it's hard to go out late anymore.

Don't di-rect me to the lost 'n' found,
Hey, Stiff.
Hey, Mañana
GERRY.
I'm not lookin' for holy ground,
WHO ARE THE VAMPIRE SISTERS?
Got a square peg, but the hole is round, an' I see-ee-e e-eeeeee e
DUDE, THAT'S CELTIC SKELTER.
THEY'RE THE BOMB.
DOW
OW! I MEANT THEIR MUSIC- JEEZ!
EVERYONE'S GONNA SHOW UP LATER FOR THEM, SO GRAB A TABLE WHILE YOU STILL CAN.
WE GOTTA SET UP.
Oh, yeah – Ursula said break a string.
I BET SHE DID.
It's too late for me.


WORKERS @$#★¢ UNITE!



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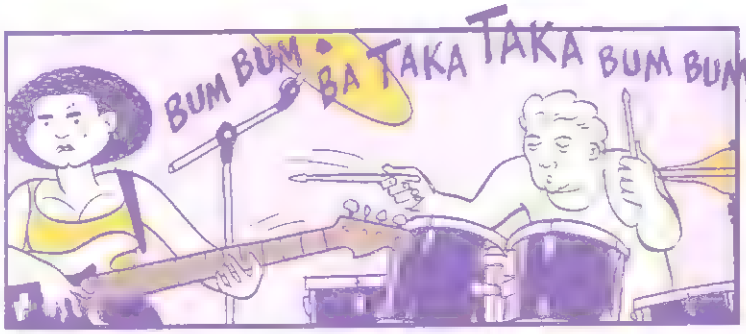
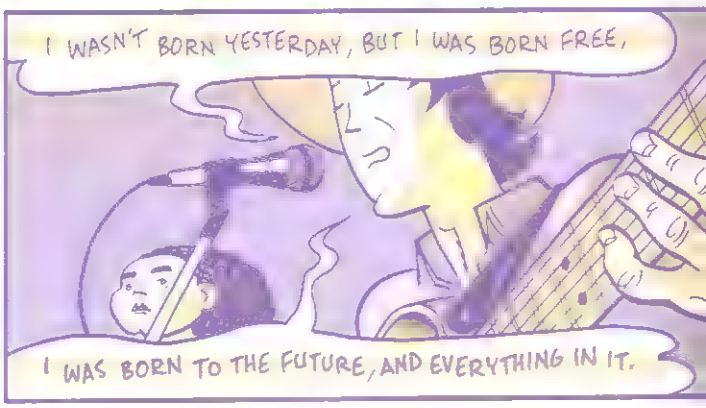
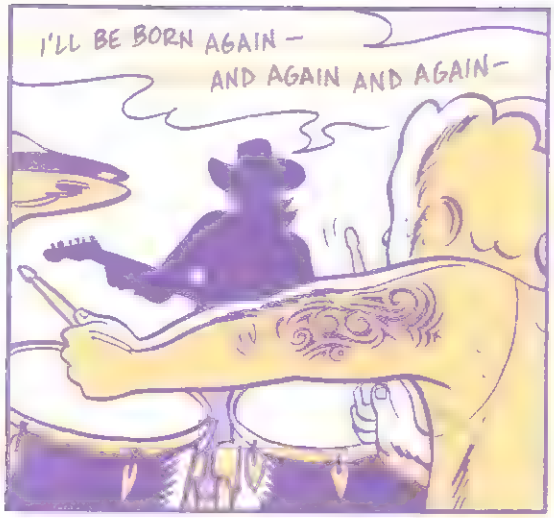
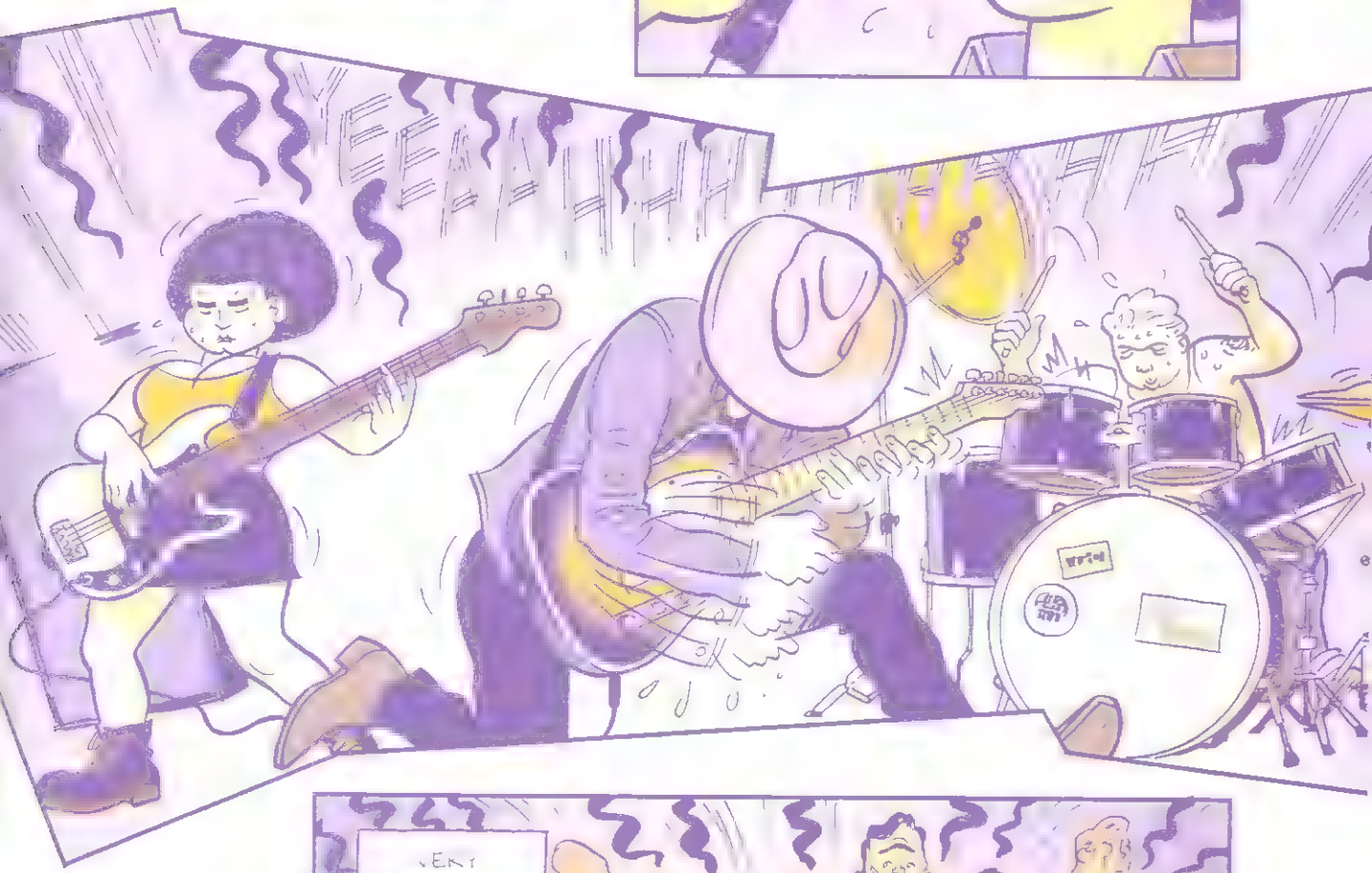

BUM BUM BA TAKA TAKA BUM BUM BA TA

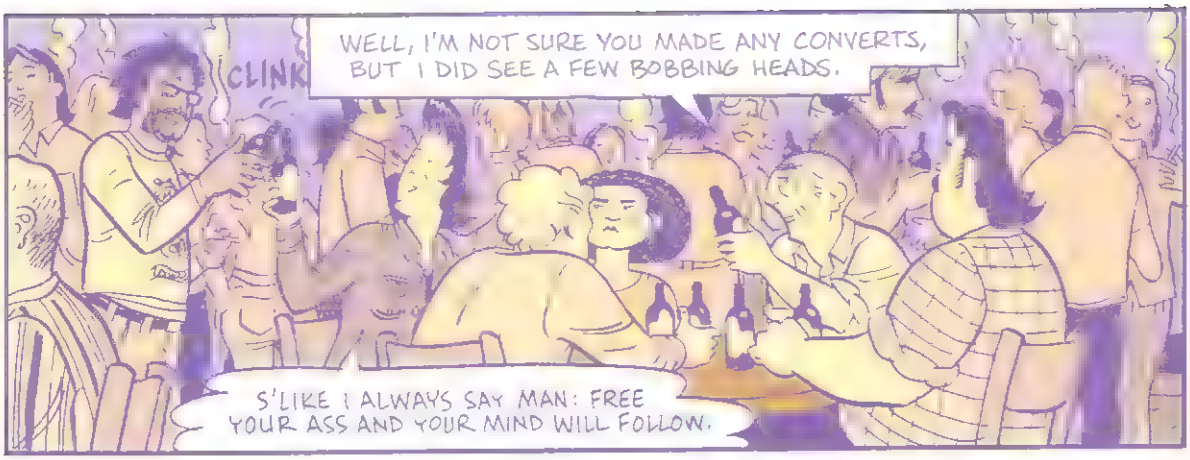

I WASN'T BORN YESTERDAY, BUT I WAS BORN FREE,
I WAS BORN TO THE FUTURE, AND EVERYTHING IN IT.

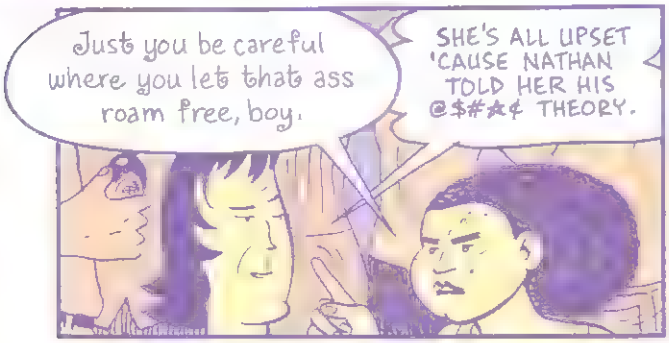

I'LL BE BORN AGAIN –
AND AGAIN AND AGAIN–

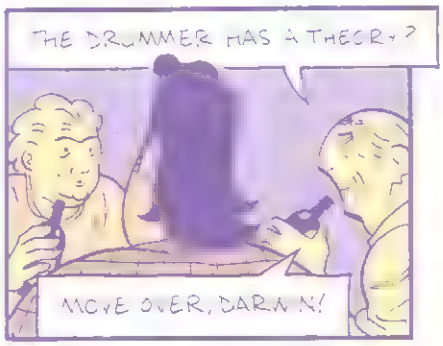
–BECUZ I AM THE SUCKA
WHO'S BORN EV'RY MINUTE.



VERY
CREDIBLE


CLINK
WELL, I'M NOT SURE YOU MADE ANY CONVERTS, BUT I DID SEE A FEW BOBBING HEADS.
S'LIKE I ALWAYS SAY MAN: FREE YOUR ASS AND YOUR MIND WILL FOLLOW.

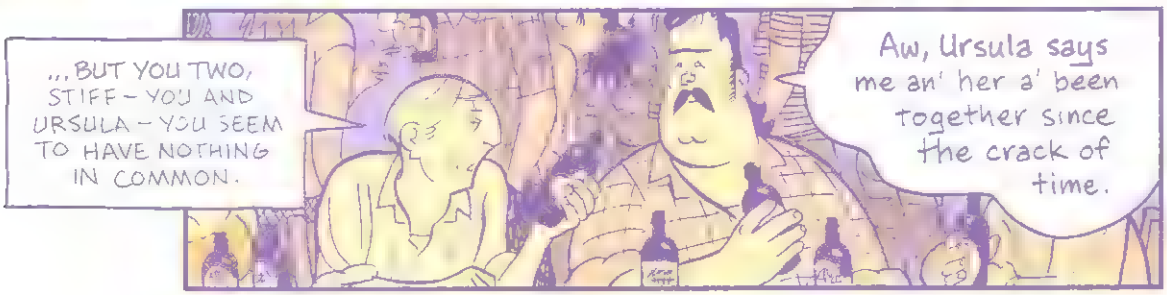

Just you be careful where you let that ass roam free, boy.
SHE'S ALL UPSET 'CAUSE NATHAN TOLD HER HIS @$#*¢ THEORY.

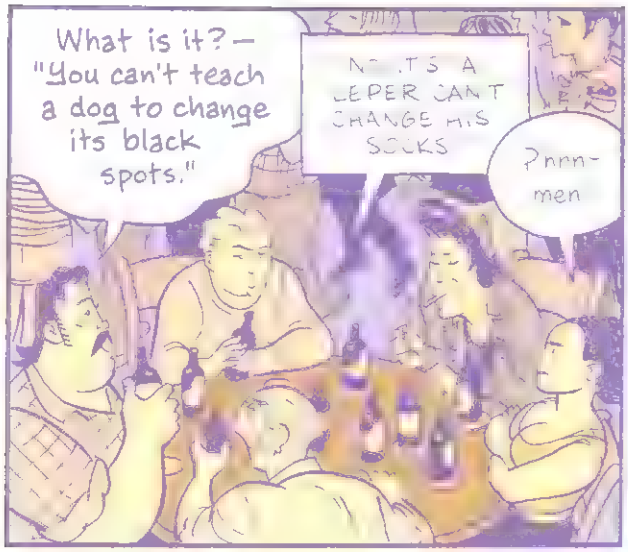

THE DRUMMER HAS A THEORY?
MOVE OVER, DARWIN!

All I said wa
YOU KNOW HOW PEOPLE GET ITCHY FOR A NEW HOOKUP EVERY SEVEN YEARS? HE SAYS IT'S 'CAUSE THAT'S HOW LONG IT TAKES FOR ALL THE CELLS IN YOUR BODY TO REGENERATE –

– SO, IT'S LIKE, EVERY SEVEN YEARS YOU'RE A TOTALLY NEW PERSON.
Yeah, but with the same mind, stoopid!

I ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT WHAT KEPT TWO PEOPLE TOGETHER WAS A COMBINATION OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ATTRACTION.


... BUT YOU TWO, STIFF – YOU AND URSULA – YOU SEEM TO HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON.
Aw, Ursula says me an' her a' been together since the crack of time.


What is it? — "You can't teach a dog to change its black spots."
NO, IT'S A LEPER CAN'T CHANGE HIS SOCKS
Pnnn-men

Water and learn.

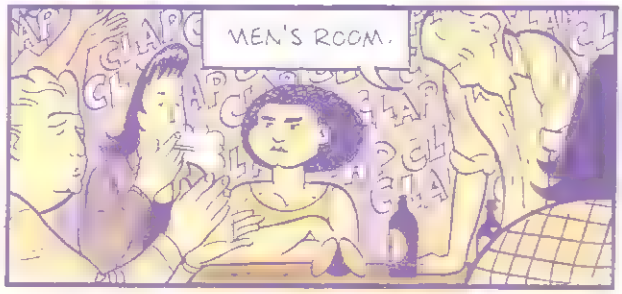
Love...

trust,

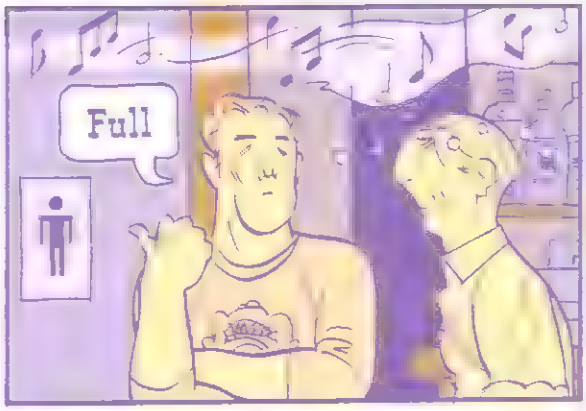
...respect.

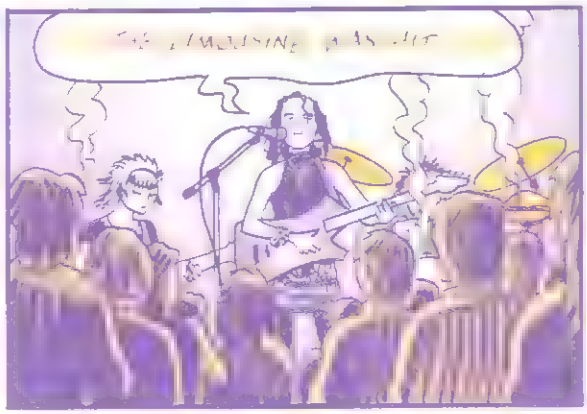
Take any one of those away and the whole thing falls apart.

HMM NOW THAT'S—
SHHH!
CELTIC SKELTER.

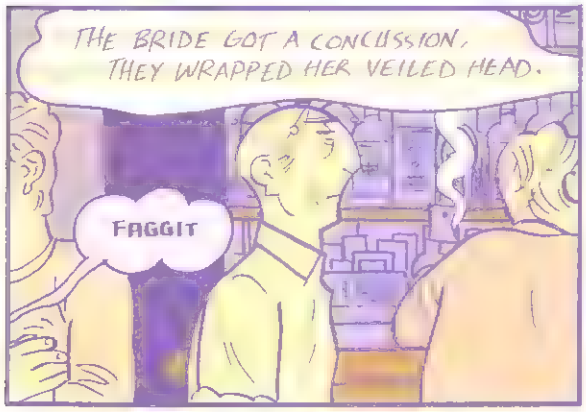

MEN'S ROOM.

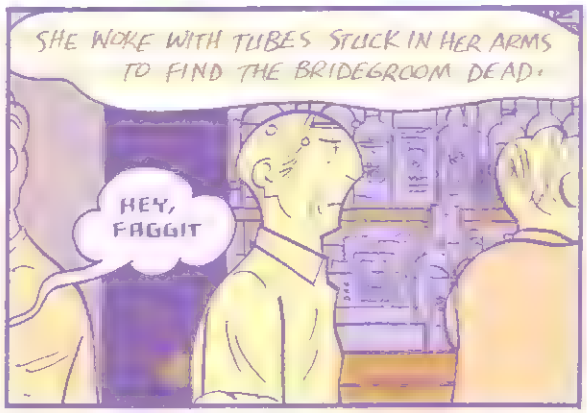
CLAP CLAP CLAP


Full

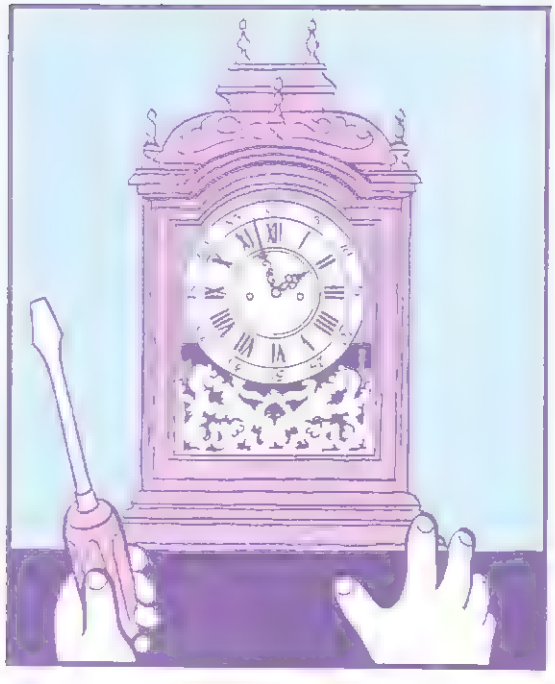


FAGGIT


THE BRIDE GOT A CONCUSSION.
THEY WRAPPED HER VEILED HEAD.
FAGGIT

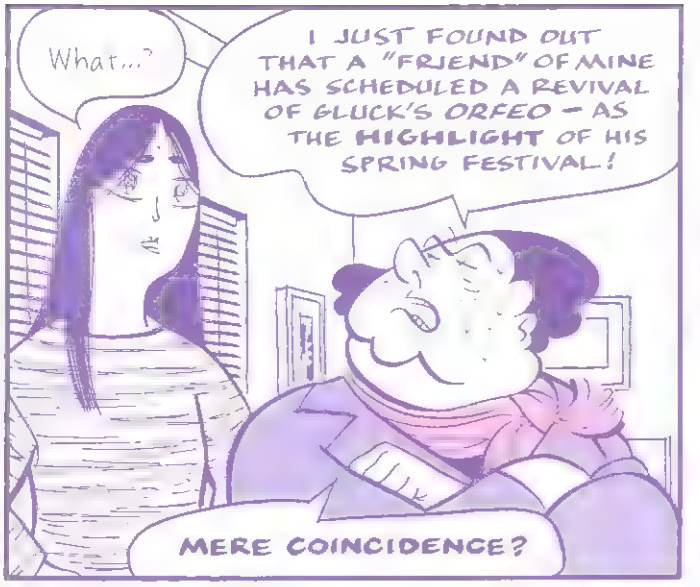

SHE WOKE WITH TUBES STUCK IN HER ARMS
TO FIND THE BRIDEGROOM DEAD.
HEY,
FAGGIT

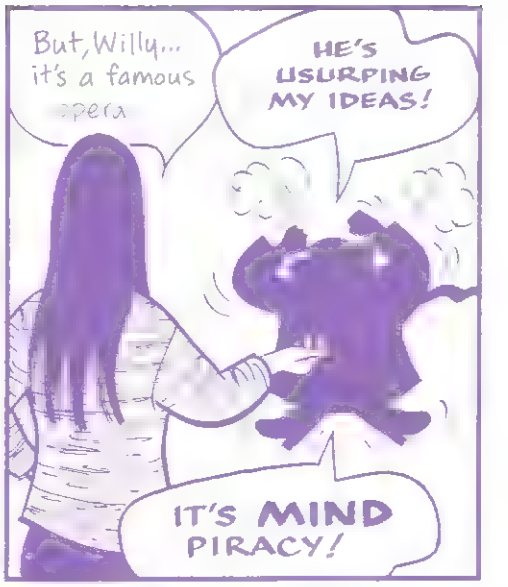
SHE TRADED HER WHITE GOWN FOR BLACK, IN BLACK HER HANDS WERE GLOVED,
FAGGIT
SHE WALKED THE AISLE ONCE AGAIN TO KISS THE MAN SHE LOVED.
YEAH, YOU, FAGGIT, I'M TALKIN' TA YOU
FA-A-A-GGIT
FLICK
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, ASSHO—
SMASH!
HNH — THIS FAGGIT LOOKS FAMILIAR...
CLIK

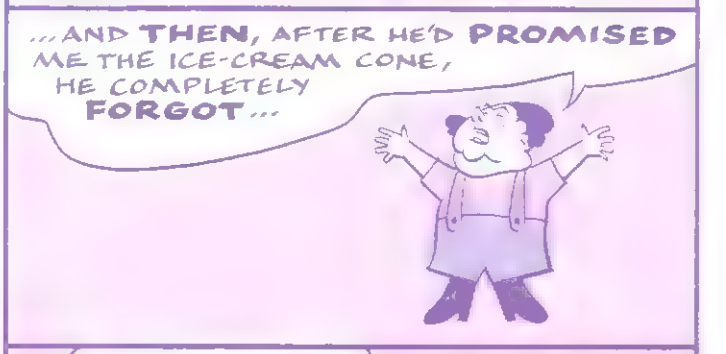


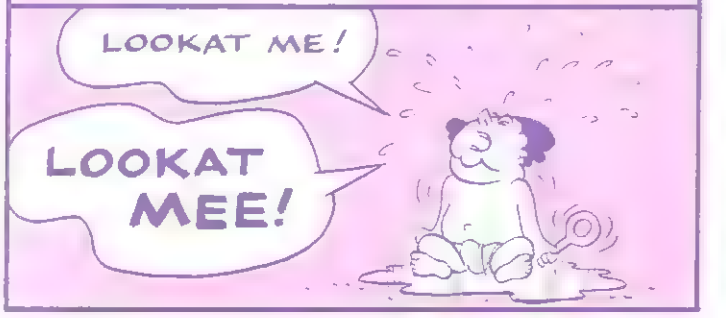
I AM THE HERO OF MY OWN STORY.

ASTERIOS THOUGHT HE UNDERSTOOD WHY PEOPLE BELIEVE IN A SOLITARY, OMNISCIENT GOD.





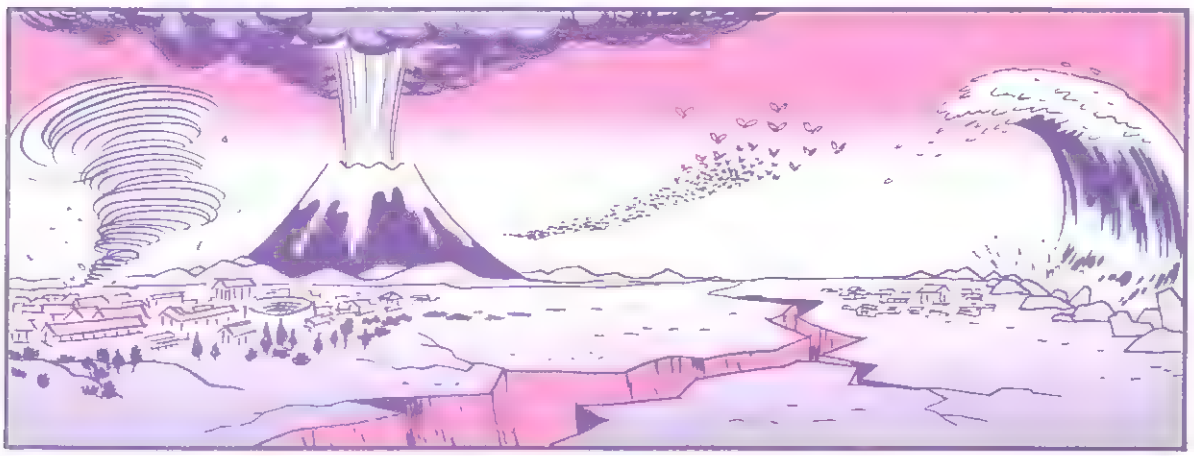


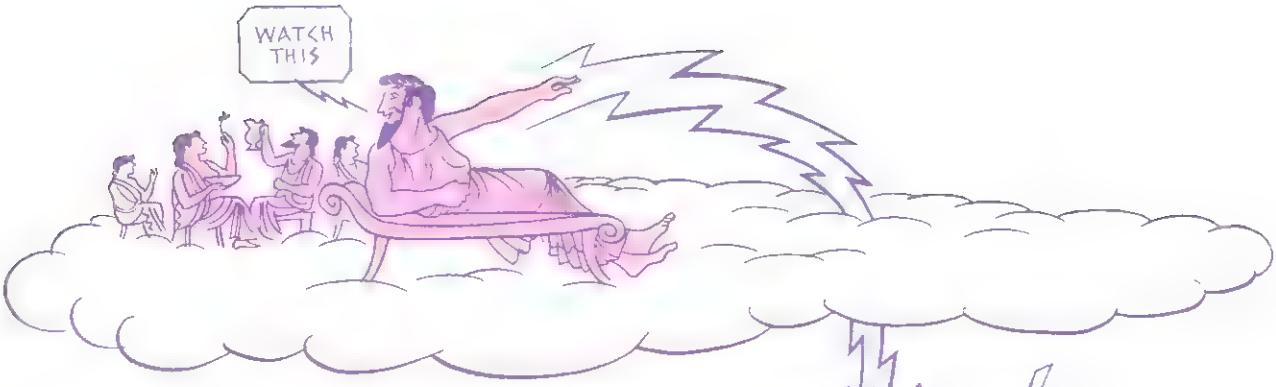


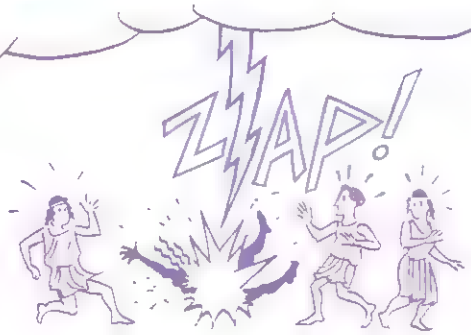
IF THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE IS SPENDING ALL HIS TIME WATCHING YOU, IT MUST SURELY BE BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU.

BUT MY BROTHER ALWAYS PREFERRED THE GODS OF OUR ANCESTORS.

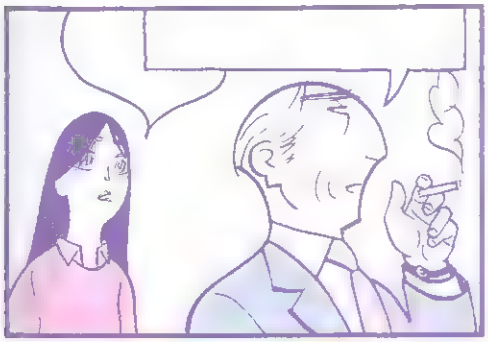
BY GIVING THEM HUMAN PERSONALITIES, THE ANCIENT GREEKS COULD FEEL THAT THE WORLD MADE SENSE...

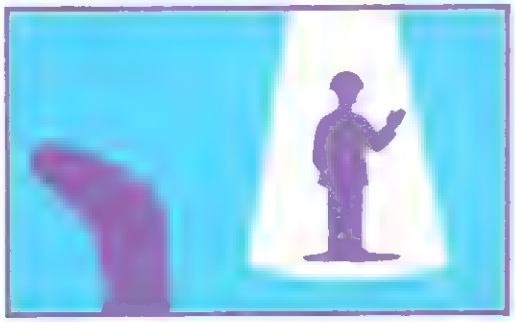




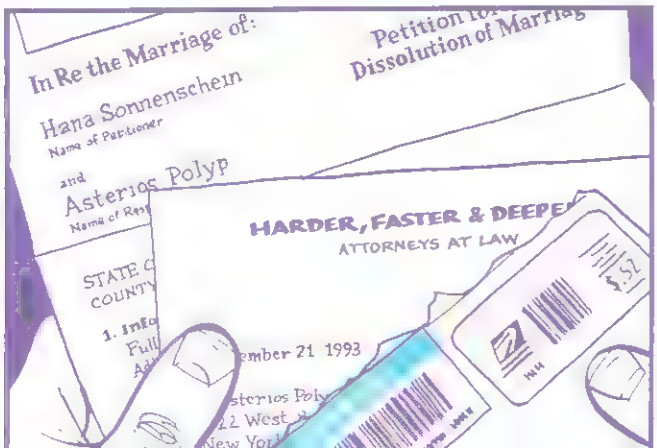


...BECAUSE ONLY THE WHIMS OF A BUNCH OF PETTY, BICKERING DEITIES COULD EXPLAIN THE RANDOM EVENTS OF JOY AND TRAGEDY THAT BEFALL HUMAN BEINGS.





BESIDES, IT'S ALWAYS NICE TO HAVE SOMEONE ELSE TO BLAME.

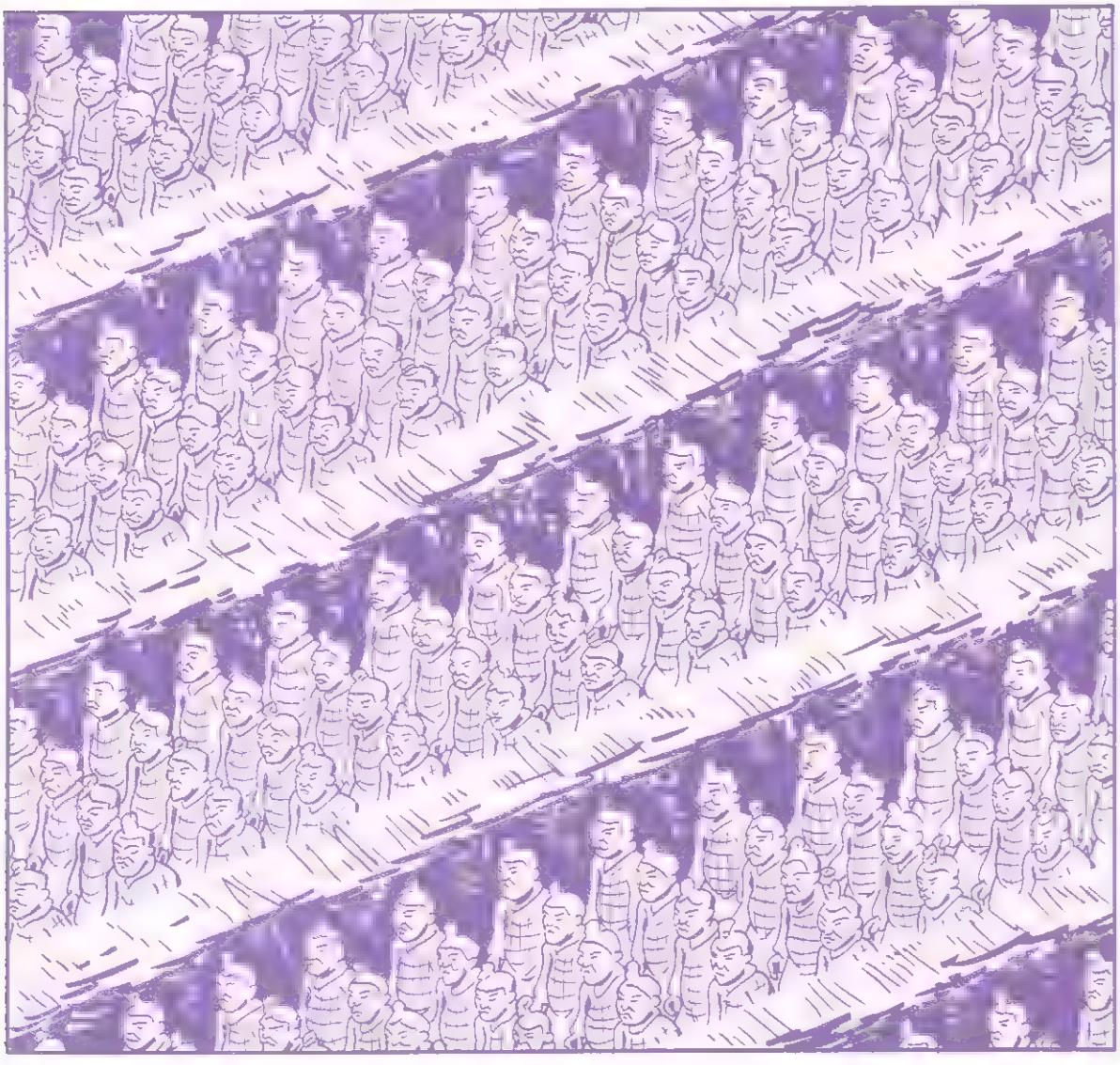


THE PRESSURE'S OFF, AND EVERYONE CAN BE A SUPPORTING CHARACTER IN THE LARGER STORY–

—HOWEVER BRIEF OR COLLATERAL
THAT ROLE MAY BE.

THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA, QIN SHIHUANG, PREPARED FOR ETERNITY BY ORDERING THAT A REPLICA OF HIS VAST ARMY BE BURIED WITH HIM WHEN HE DIED.

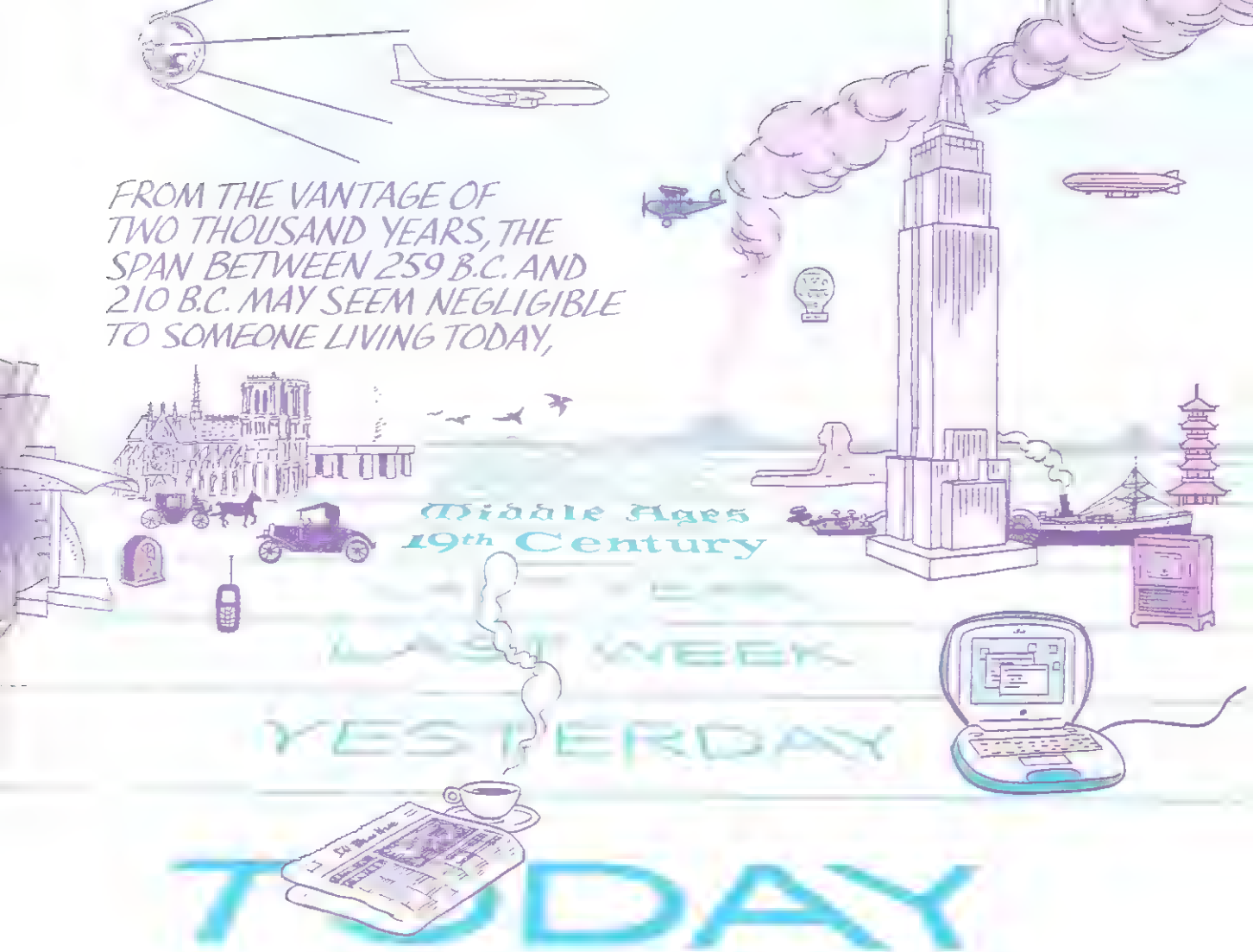
THIS WAS CERTAINLY AN IMPROVEMENT ON THE LOCAL RULERS' TRADITION OF INTERRING AN ENTIRE RETINUE ALIVE.



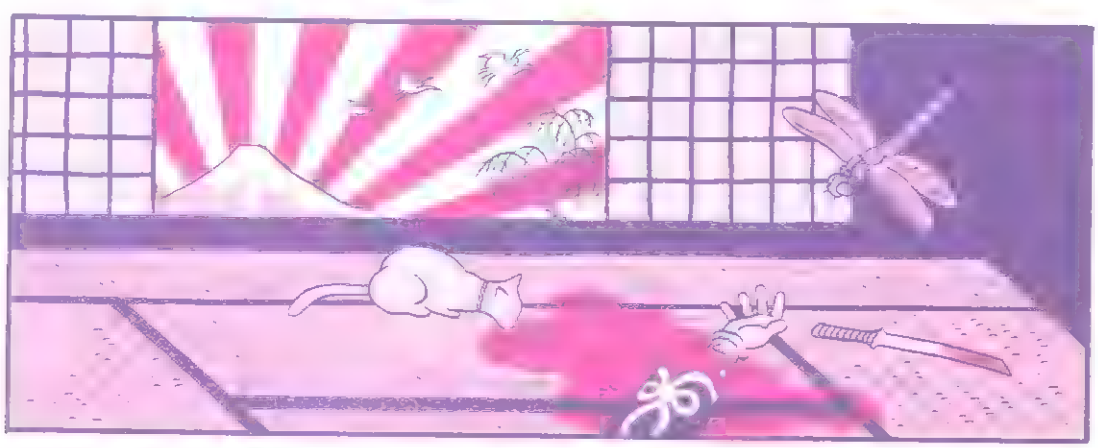
SEVEN THOUSAND TERRA-COTTA SOLDIERS STOOD WATCH IN HIS TOMB, UNDISTURBED, FOR TWO MILLENNIA.

THE EMPEROR, BORN IN 259 B.C., EXPIRED IN 210 B.C., BEFORE HE COULD CELEBRATE HIS FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY.

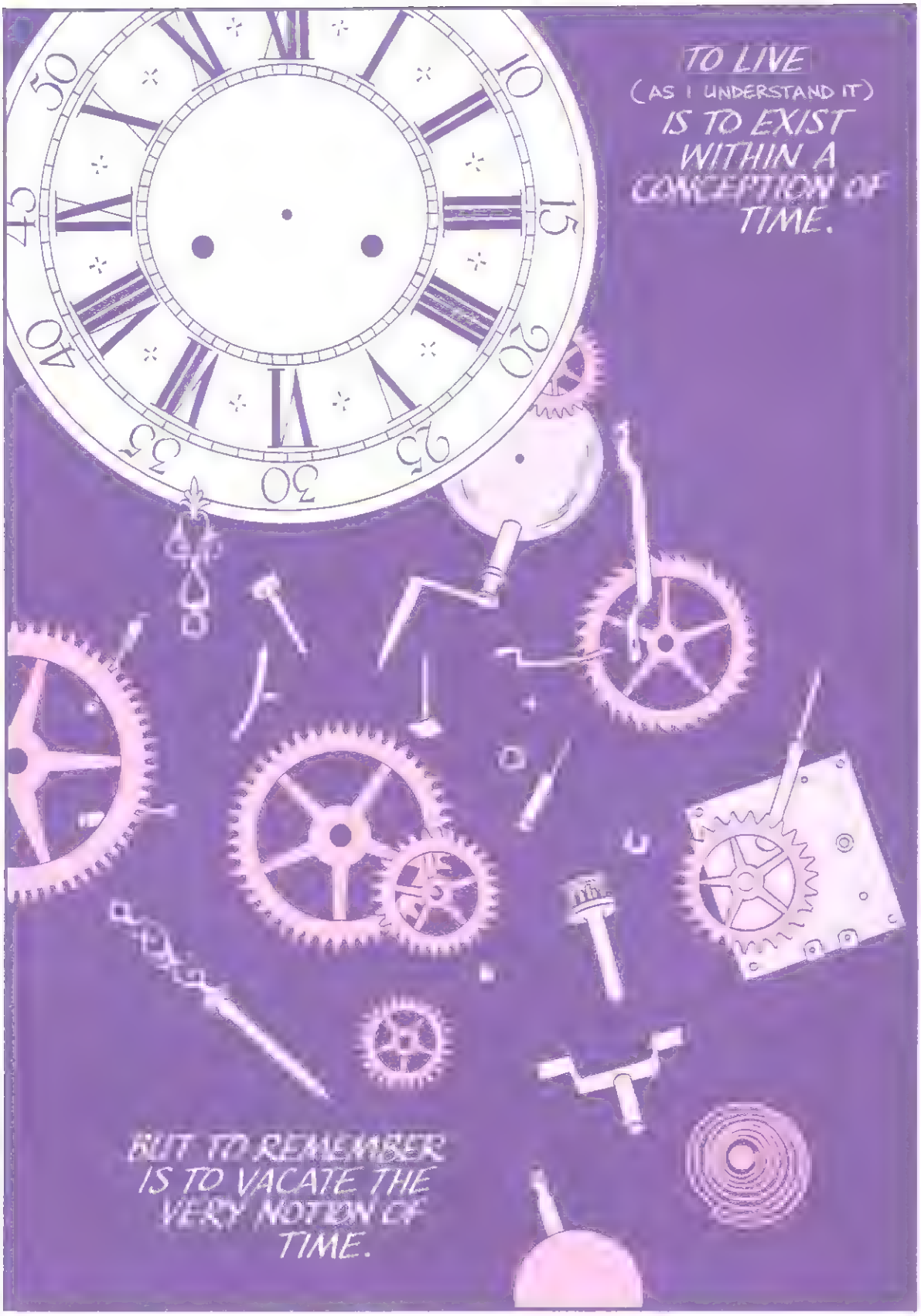
FROM THE VANTAGE OF TWO THOUSAND YEARS, THE SPAN BETWEEN 259 B.C. AND 210 B.C. MAY SEEM NEGLIGIBLE TO SOMEONE LIVING TODAY,



BUT (ASTERIOS COULD TELL YOU BETTER THAN I) EACH OF THOSE EIGHTEEN THOUSAND DAYS MUST HAVE BEEN AS PRECIOUS AND UNPREDICTABLE AS THIS ONE.



AFTER ALL, WHO KNOWS WHICH DAY WILL BE HIS LAST?

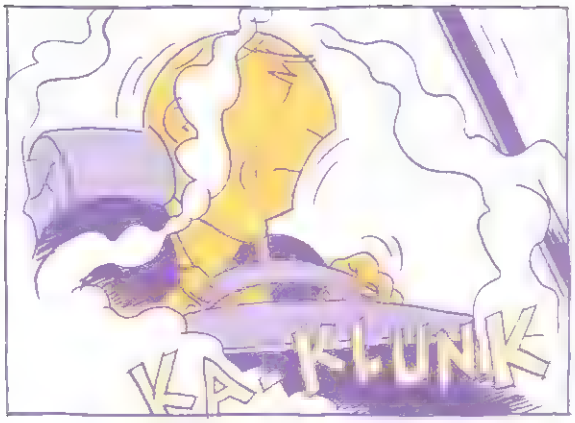

TO LIVE
(AS I UNDERSTAND IT)
IS TO EXIST
WITHIN A
CONCEPTION OF
TIME.
BUT TO REMEMBER
IS TO VACATE THE
VERY NOTION OF
TIME.

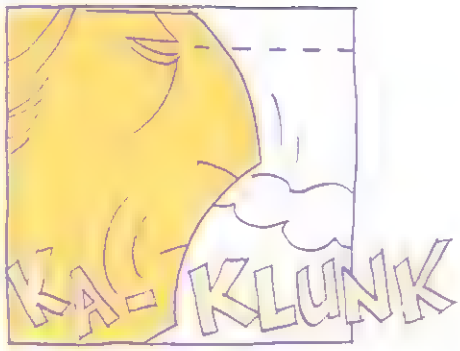
EVERY MEMORY, NO MATTER HOW REMOTE ITS SUBJECT, TAKES PLACE "NOW," AT THE MOMENT IT'S CALLED UP IN THE MIND.

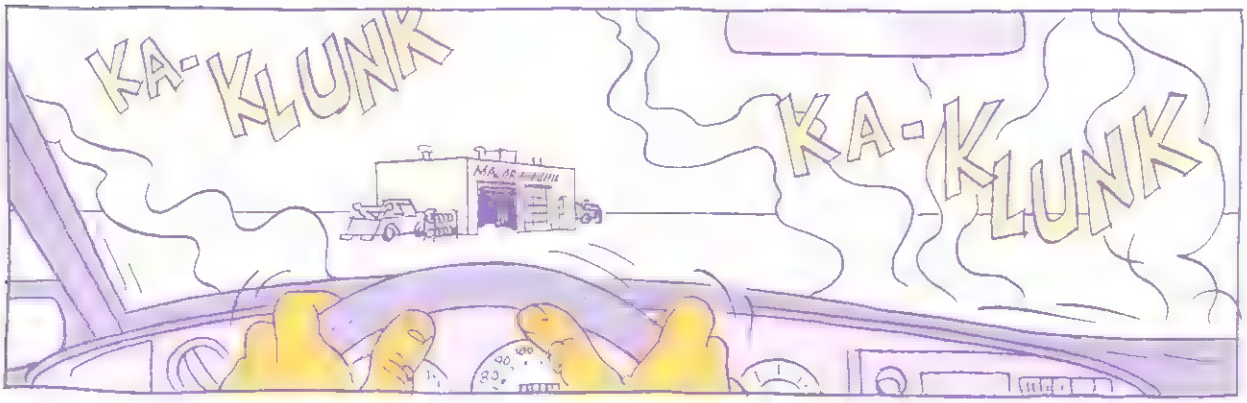
THE MORE SOMETHING IS RECALLED, THE MORE THE BRAIN HAS A CHANCE TO REFINE THE ORIGINAL EXPERIENCE,

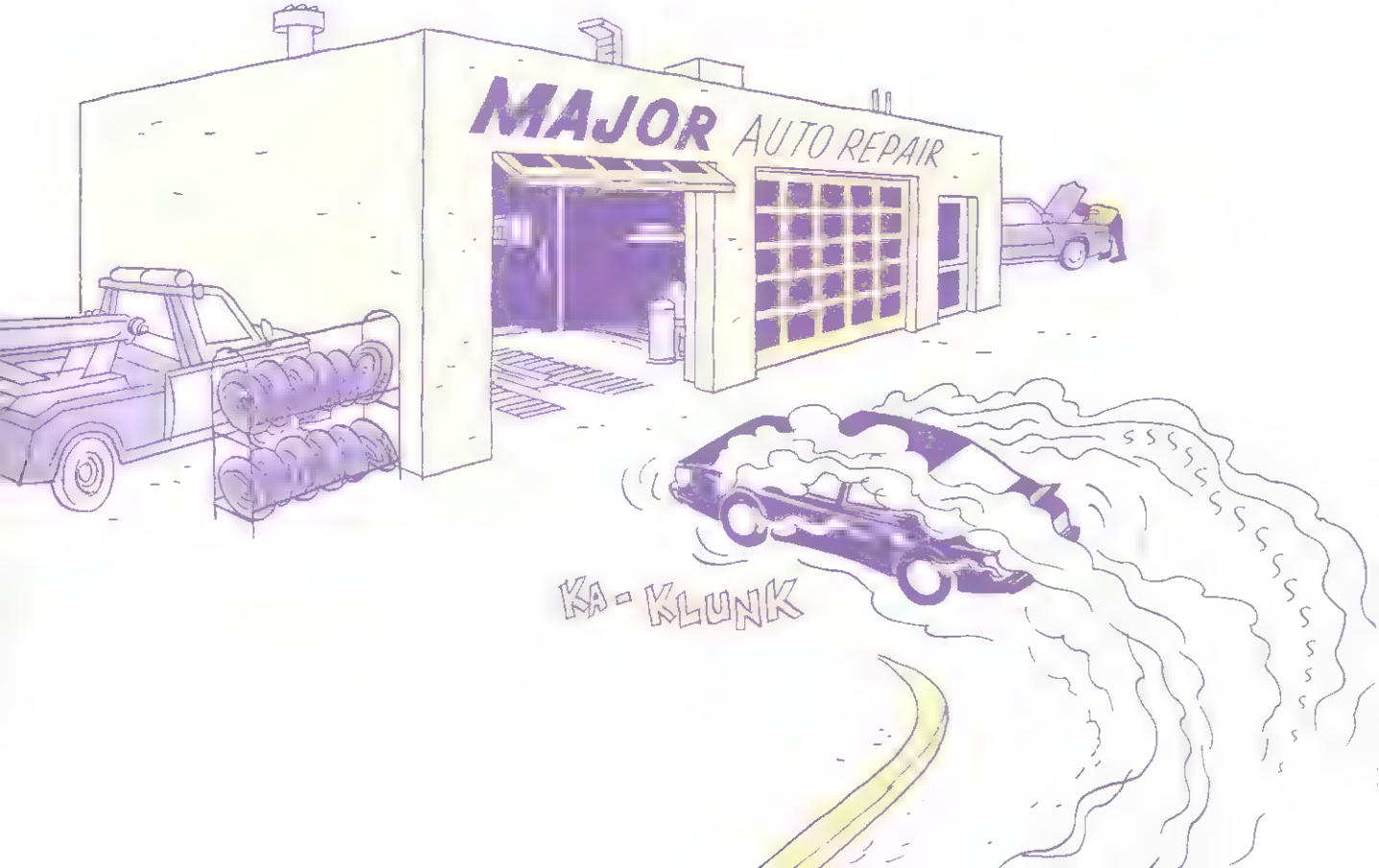
BECAUSE EVERY MEMORY IS A RE-CREATION, NOT A PLAYBACK.

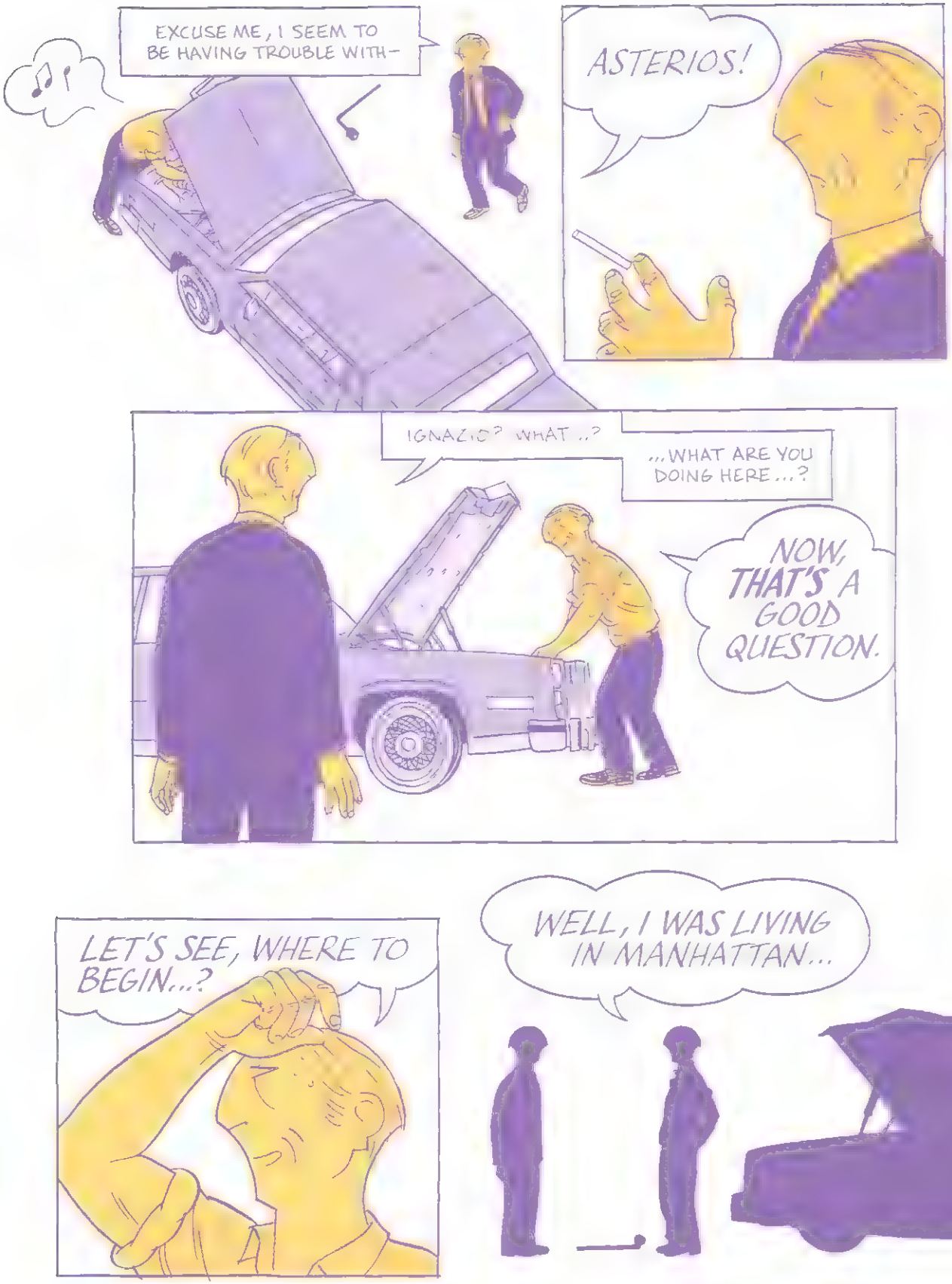
KA-KLUNK
KA-THUNK
KA-KA-KLUNK


KA-KLUNK


KA-KLUNK

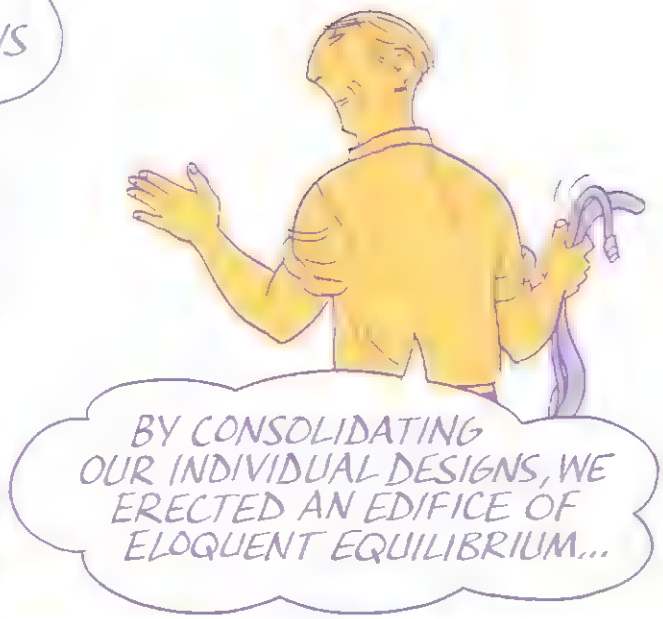

KA-KLUNK
KA-KLUNK

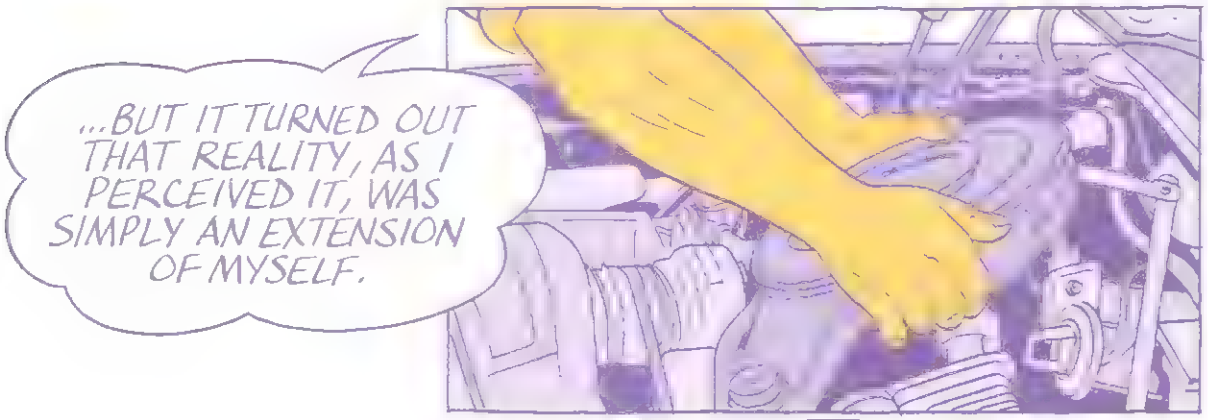

MAJOR AUTO REPAIR
KA-KLUNK

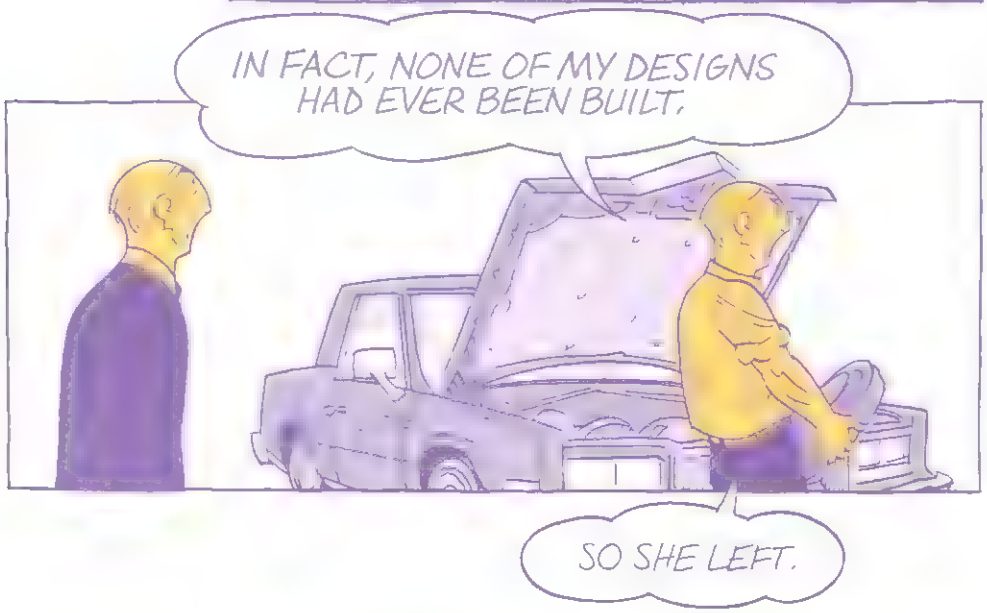

EXCUSE ME, I SEEM TO BE HAVING TROUBLE WITH–
ASTERIOS!
IGNAZIO? WHAT ..?
...WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?
NOW, THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION.
LET'S SEE, WHERE TO BEGIN...?
WELL, I WAS LIVING IN MANHATTAN...

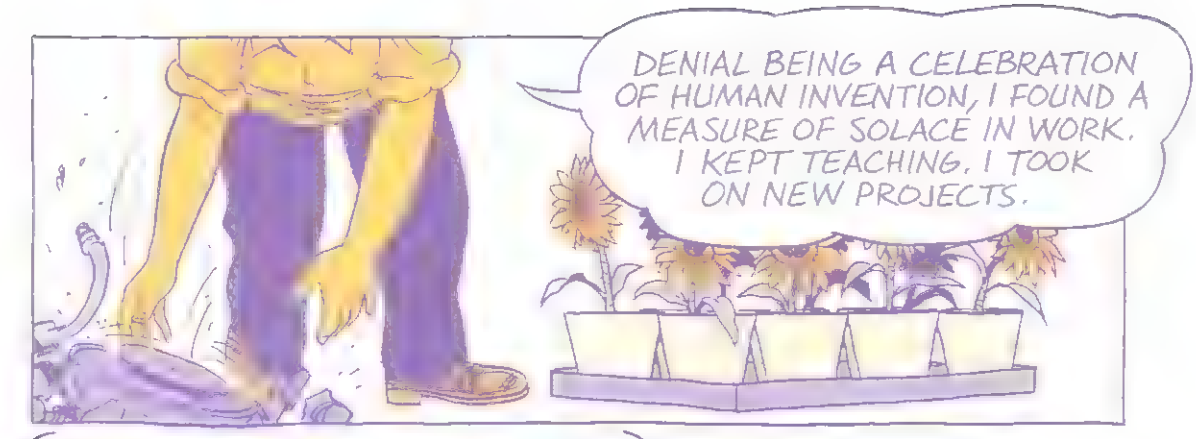
...BUT UNTIL ABOUT SEVEN YEARS AGO, I SPENT MOST OF MY TIME UPSTATE, TEACHING AT A UNIVERSITY IN ITHACA.
I WAS A TENURED PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE - A POSITION BUTTRESSED BY MY RENOWN AS A "PAPER ARCHITECT."
IT WAS THERE AT THE UNIVERSITY THAT I MET MY WIFE.
WE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE DIFFERENT, AND YET...
...OUR LIVES FOLDED INTO EACH OTHER'S WITH BARELY A WRINKLE.

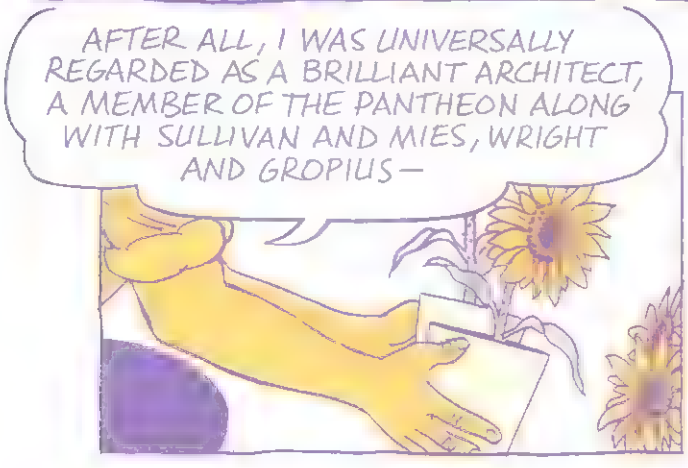
ARISTOPHANES WOULD PROBABLY HAVE SEEN IN US A VINDICATION OF HIS PURPORTED THEORY.

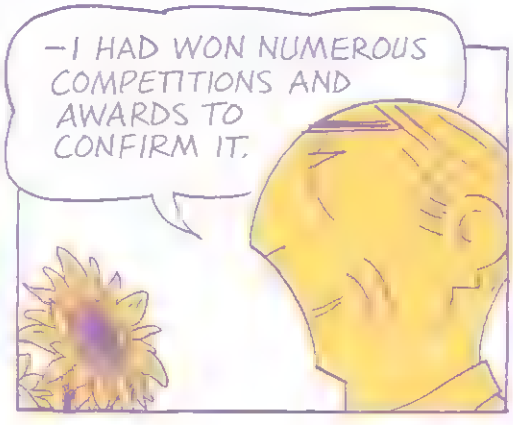

BY CONSOLIDATING OUR INDIVIDUAL DESIGNS, WE ERECTED AN EDIFICE OF ELOQUENT EQUILIBRIUM...

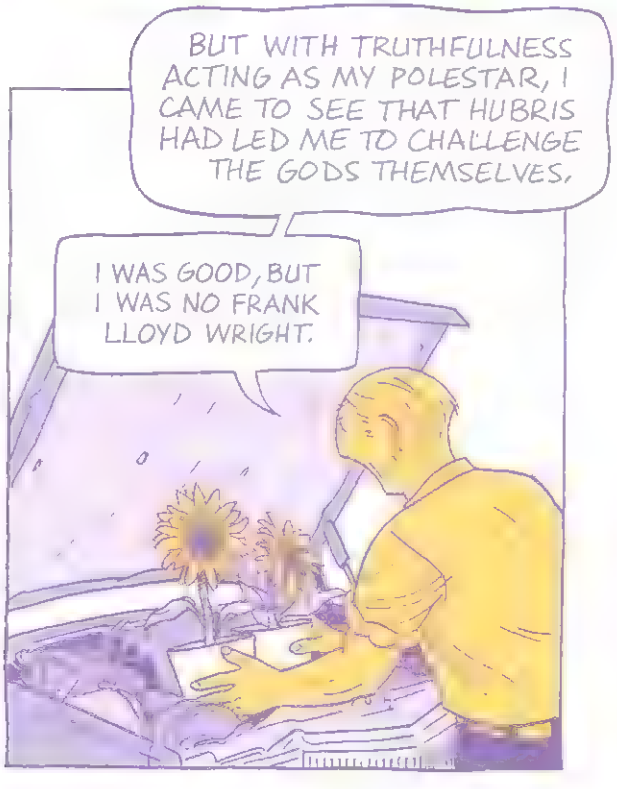

...BUT IT TURNED OUT THAT REALITY, AS I PERCEIVED IT, WAS SIMPLY AN EXTENSION OF MYSELF.

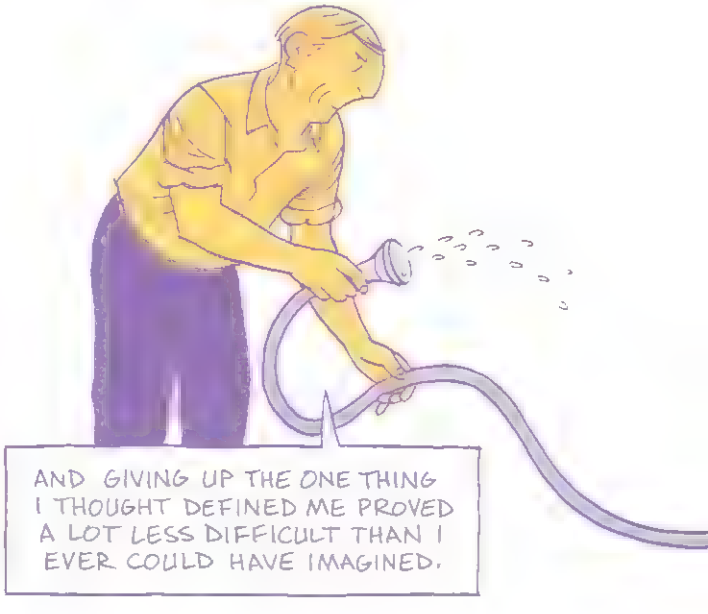

IN FACT, NONE OF MY DESIGNS HAD EVER BEEN BUILT.
SO SHE LEFT.

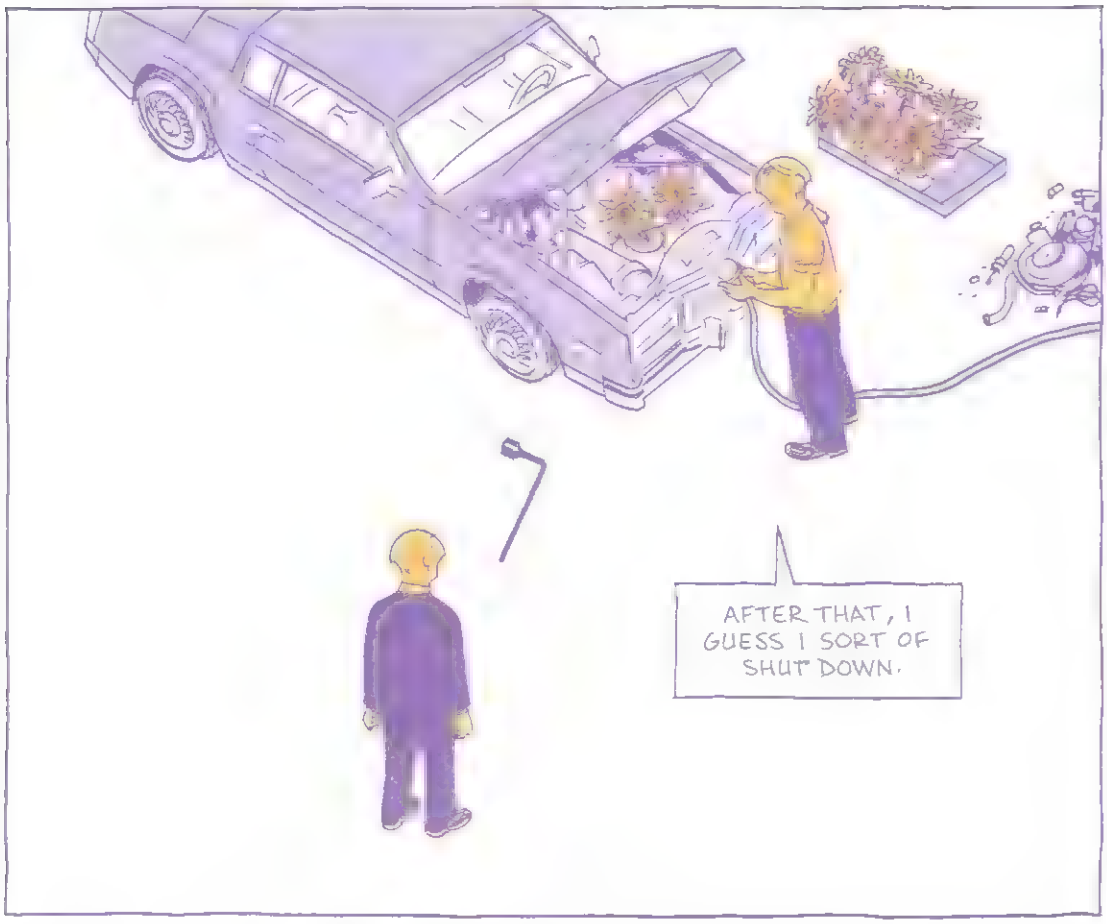

DENIAL BEING A CELEBRATION OF HUMAN INVENTION, I FOUND A MEASURE OF SOLACE IN WORK. I KEPT TEACHING. I TOOK ON NEW PROJECTS.

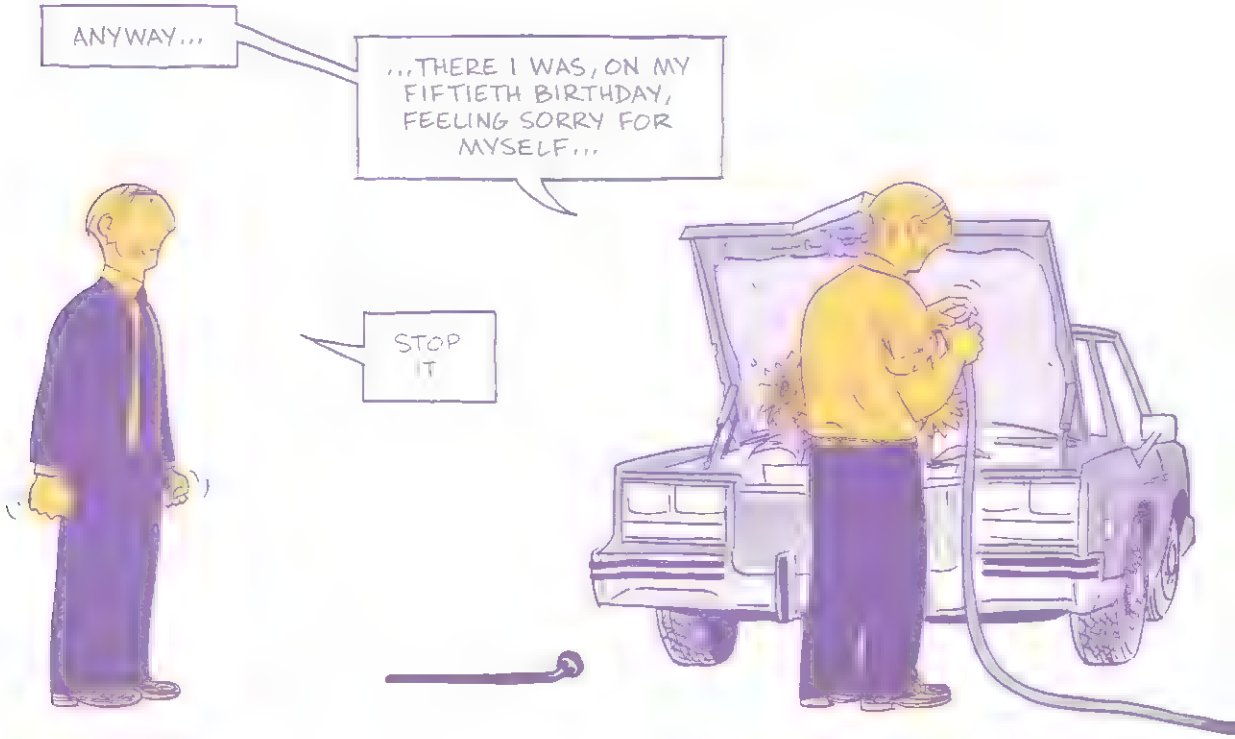

AFTER ALL, I WAS UNIVERSALLY REGARDED AS A BRILLIANT ARCHITECT, A MEMBER OF THE PANTHEON ALONG WITH SULLIVAN AND MIES, WRIGHT AND GROPIUS—


—I HAD WON NUMEROUS COMPETITIONS AND AWARDS TO CONFIRM IT.


BUT WITH TRUTHFULNESS ACTING AS MY POLESTAR, I CAME TO SEE THAT HUBRIS HAD LED ME TO CHALLENGE THE GODS THEMSELVES.
I WAS GOOD, BUT I WAS NO FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT.


AND GIVING UP THE ONE THING I THOUGHT DEFINED ME PROVED A LOT LESS DIFFICULT THAN I EVER COULD HAVE IMAGINED.


AFTER THAT, I GUESS I SORT OF SHUT DOWN.


ANYWAY...
...THERE I WAS, ON MY FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY, FEELING SORRY FOR MYSELF...
STOP IT

...WHEN A LIGHTNING BOLT HIT THE SIDE OF MY BUILDING, INCINERATING MY APARTMENT...

STOP IT!

... SO I TOOK ALMOST ALL THE MONEY I HAD LEFT AND BOUGHT A BUS TICKET –

I SAID –

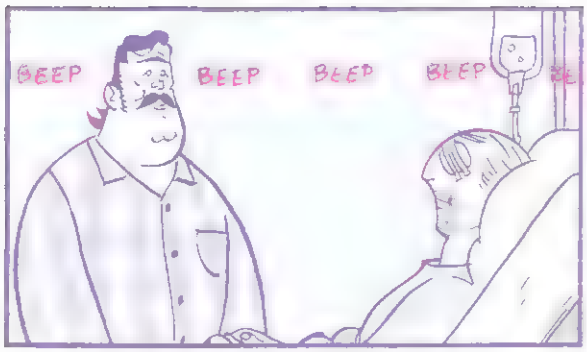
–STOP IT!

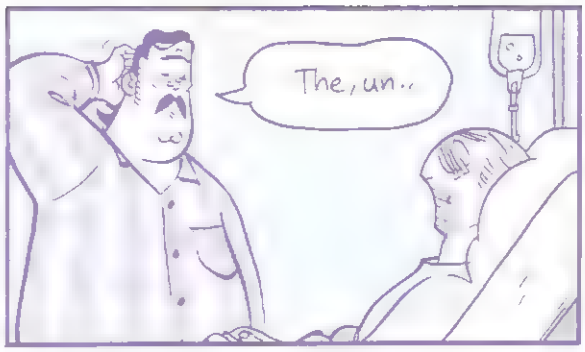
BEEP

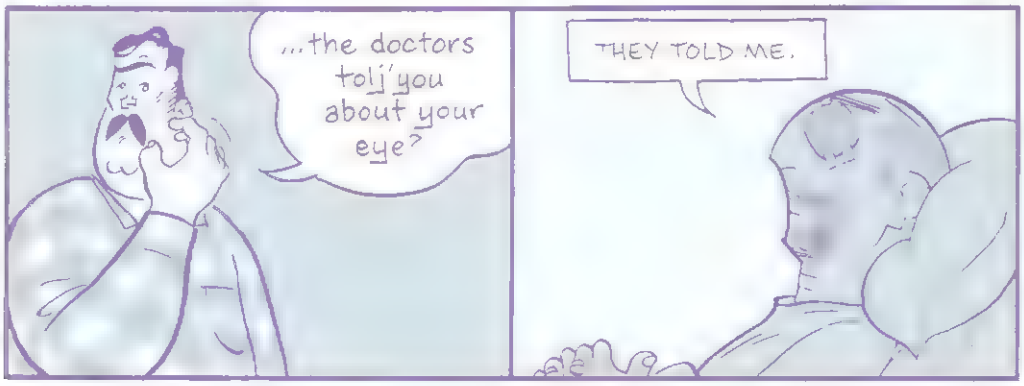
Hey, Sterio– you're awake!
...HEY STIFF
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

How you feelin'?
.. 'VE BEEN BETTER
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

Aw, Ursula's always tellin' me I gotta do more male bondage stuff.
WELL... I APPRECIATE IT.


BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP


The, un..


...the doctors tolj'you about your eye?
THEY TOLD ME.

BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

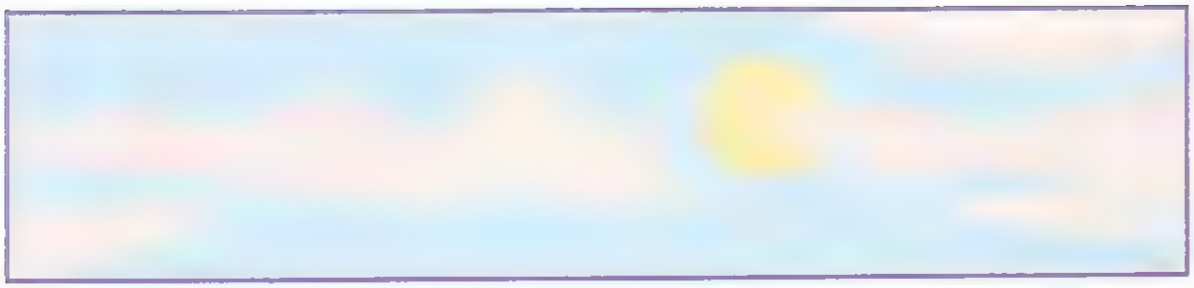
So... can I getcha anythin'?
NOT RIGHT NOW, THANKS.

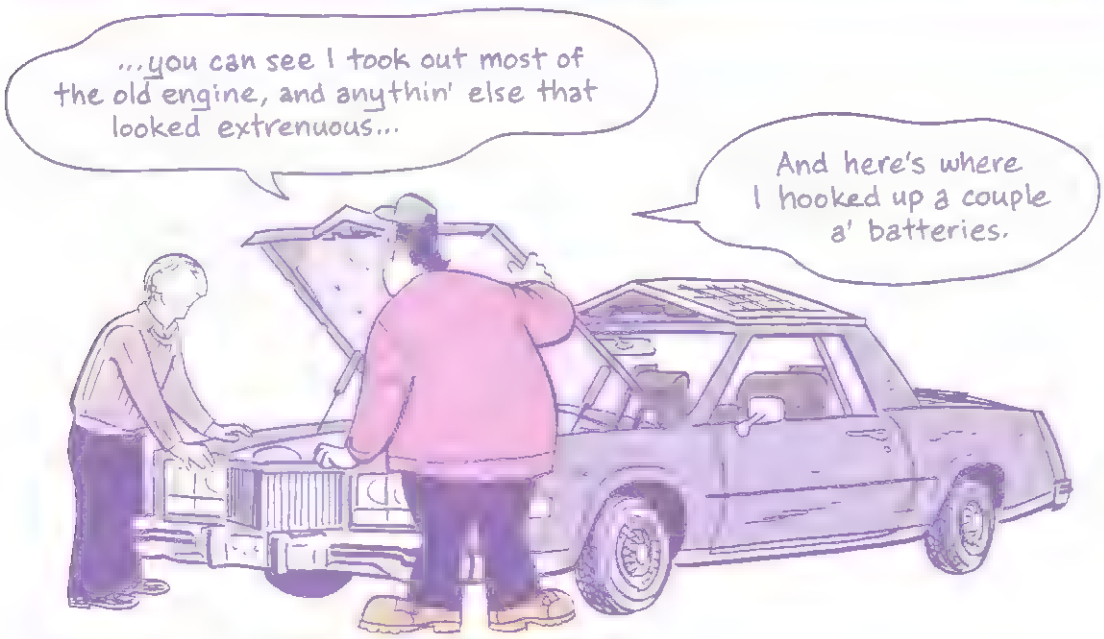
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

STIFF.
...HOW MUCH WOULD YOU WANT FOR THE SOLAR CADDY?

... If you can get her to run, she's yours.
Why — you goin' somewhere?

YEAH, I'M GOING SOMEWHERE.



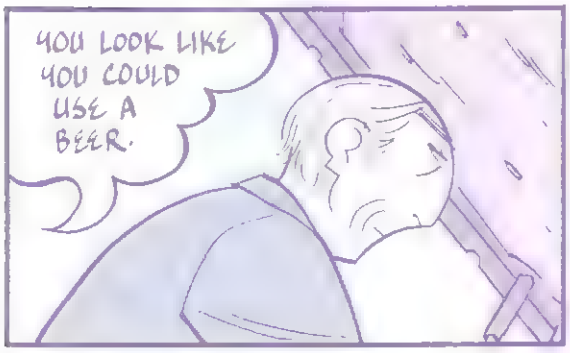

...you can see I took out most of the old engine, and anythin' else that looked extrenuous...
And here's where I hooked up a couple a' batteries.

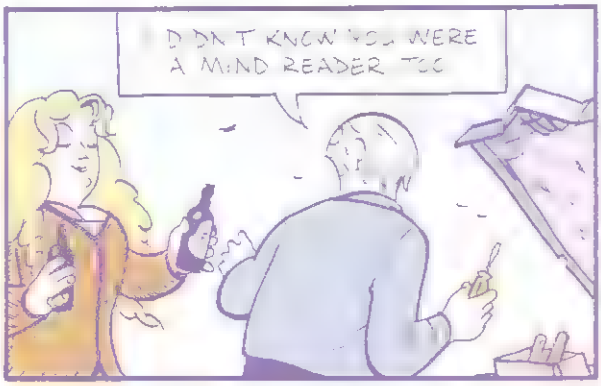
I think the main problem was storin' enough juice – it's such a big car, it's like movin' a molehill.
WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SOLVE THAT BY LOSING MORE WEIGHT –
– MAYBE TAKING OUT THE REAR SEATS, AND USING THAT SPACE FOR EXTRA STORAGE CELLS.

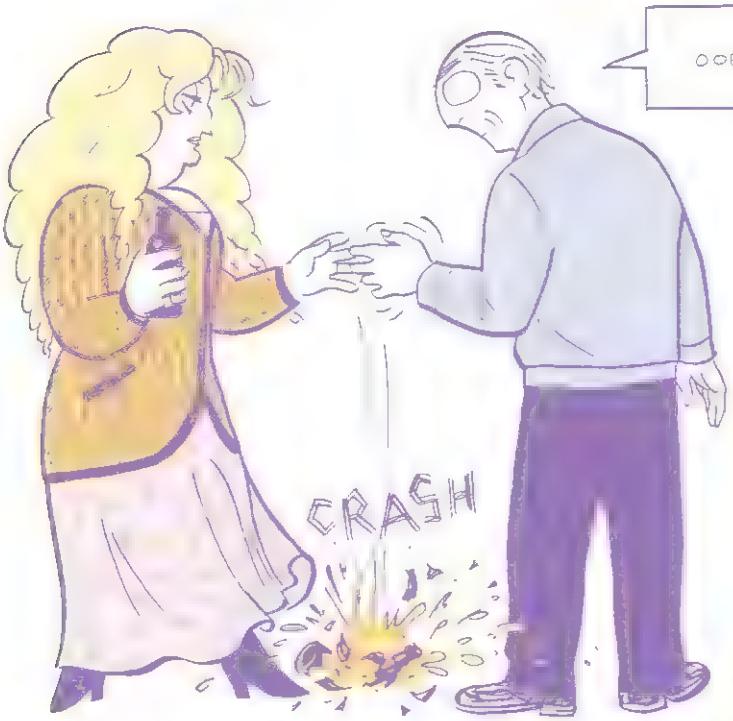
You're still haulin' a lot It'd probably be easier just to start from scrap.
I DON'T KNOW...

...IT'S A CREATIVE CHALLENGE.
BESIDES, I KIND OF LIKE THIS OLD BOAT.

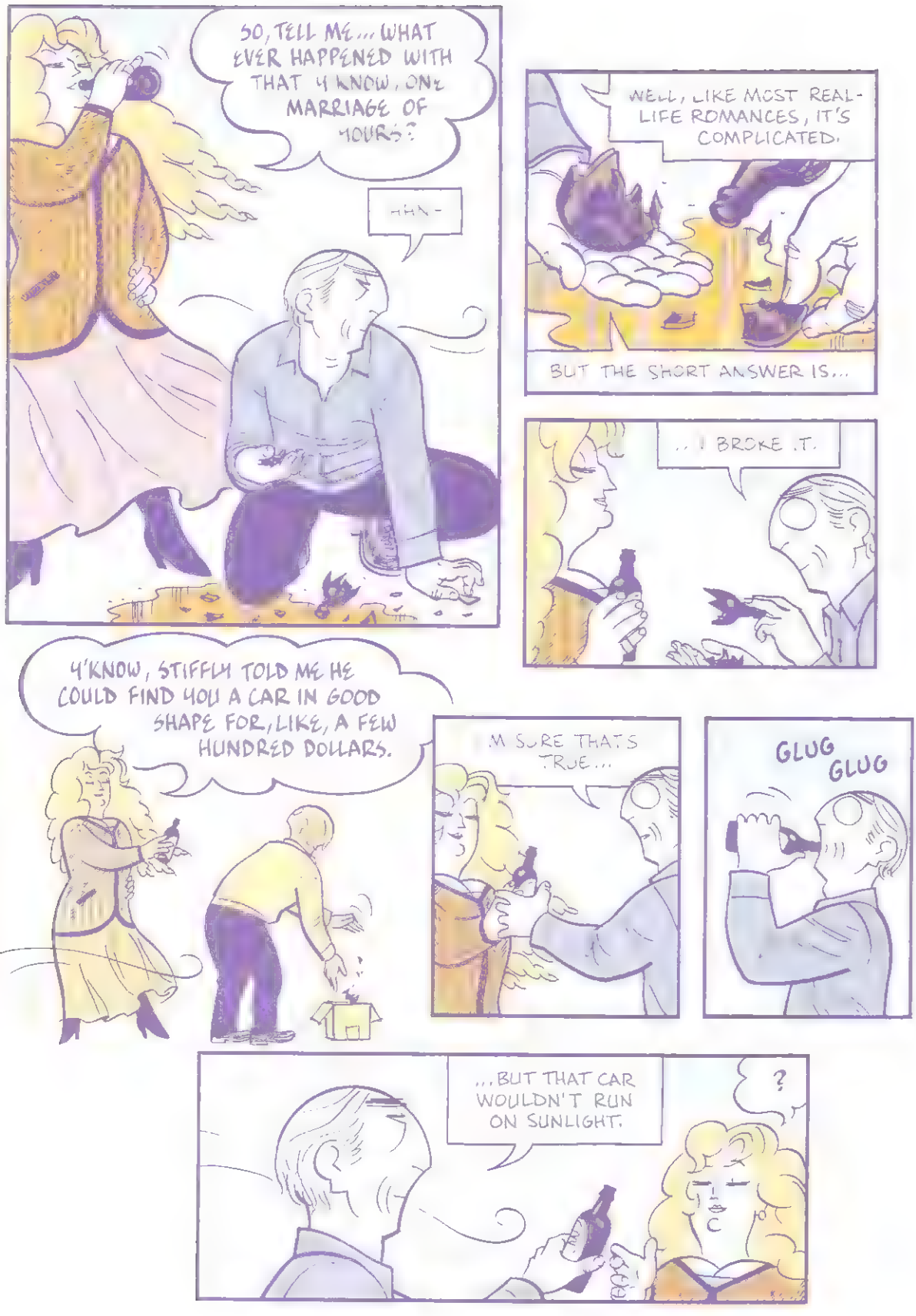
THE SOLAR MANUAL

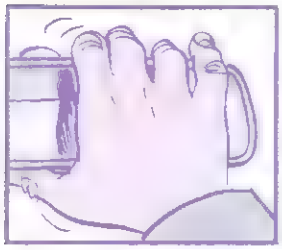

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU COULD USE A BEER.

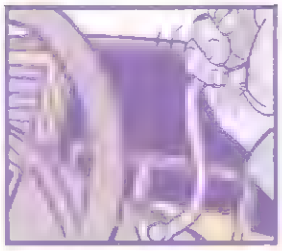

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE A MIND READER TOO

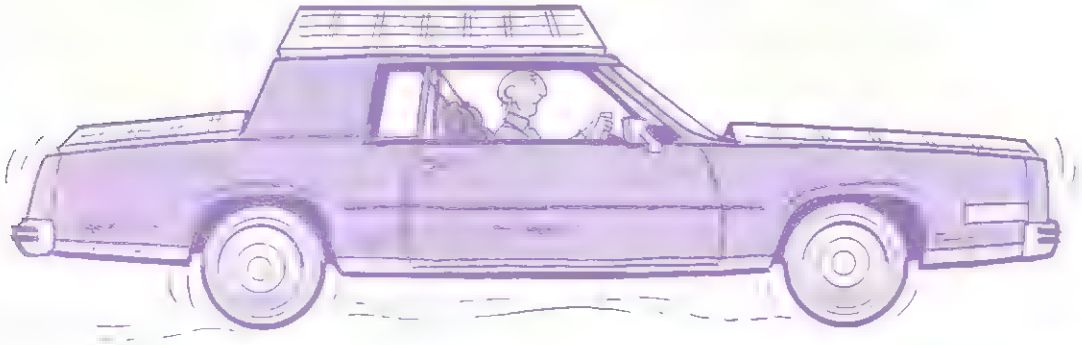

OOPS
CRASH

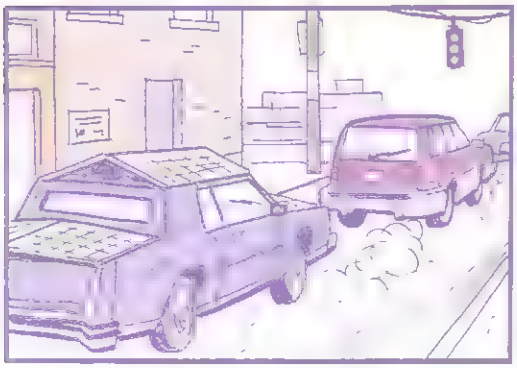
SORRY ABOUT THAT. I'M STILL GETTING USED TO THE LACK OF PARALLAX.

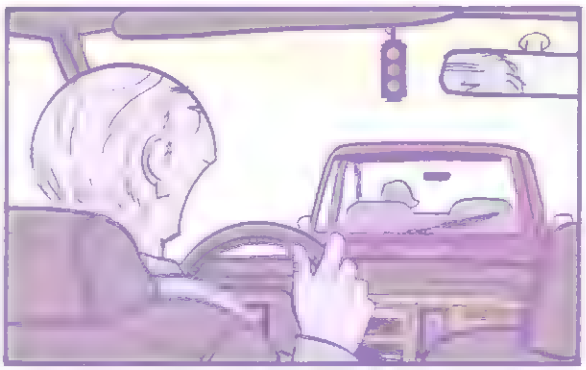

SO, TELL ME... WHAT EVER HAPPENED WITH THAT Y'KNOW, ONE MARRIAGE OF YOURS?
-HA-
WELL, LIKE MOST REAL-LIFE ROMANCES, IT'S COMPLICATED.
BUT THE SHORT ANSWER IS...
...I BROKE IT.
Y'KNOW, STIFFLY TOLD ME HE COULD FIND YOU A CAR IN GOOD SHAPE FOR, LIKE, A FEW HUNDRED DOLLARS.
I'M SURE THAT'S TRUE...
GLUG GLUG
...BUT THAT CAR WOULDN'T RUN ON SUNLIGHT.
?

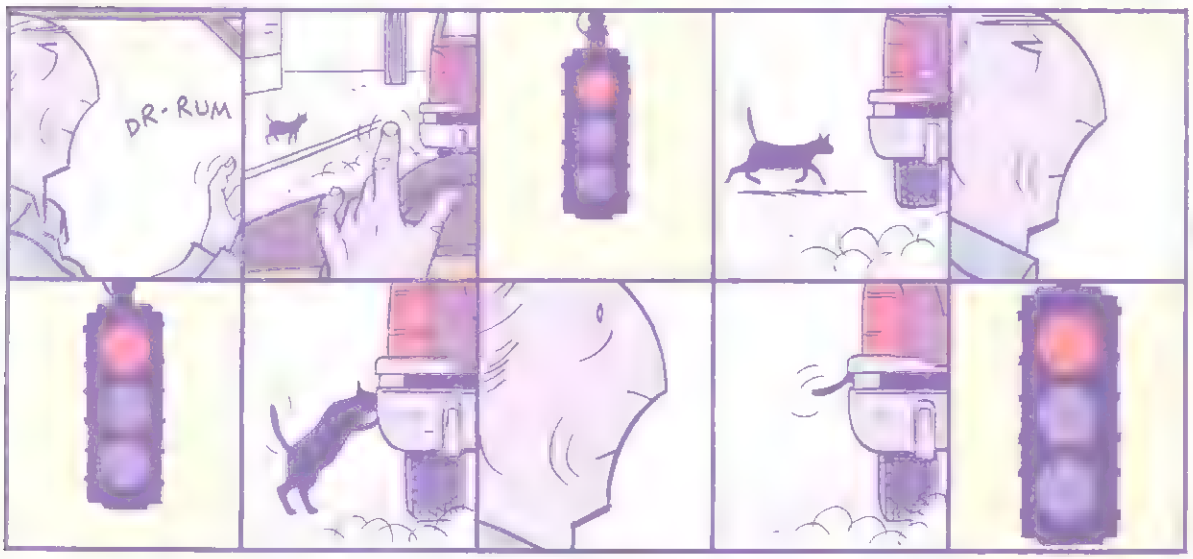




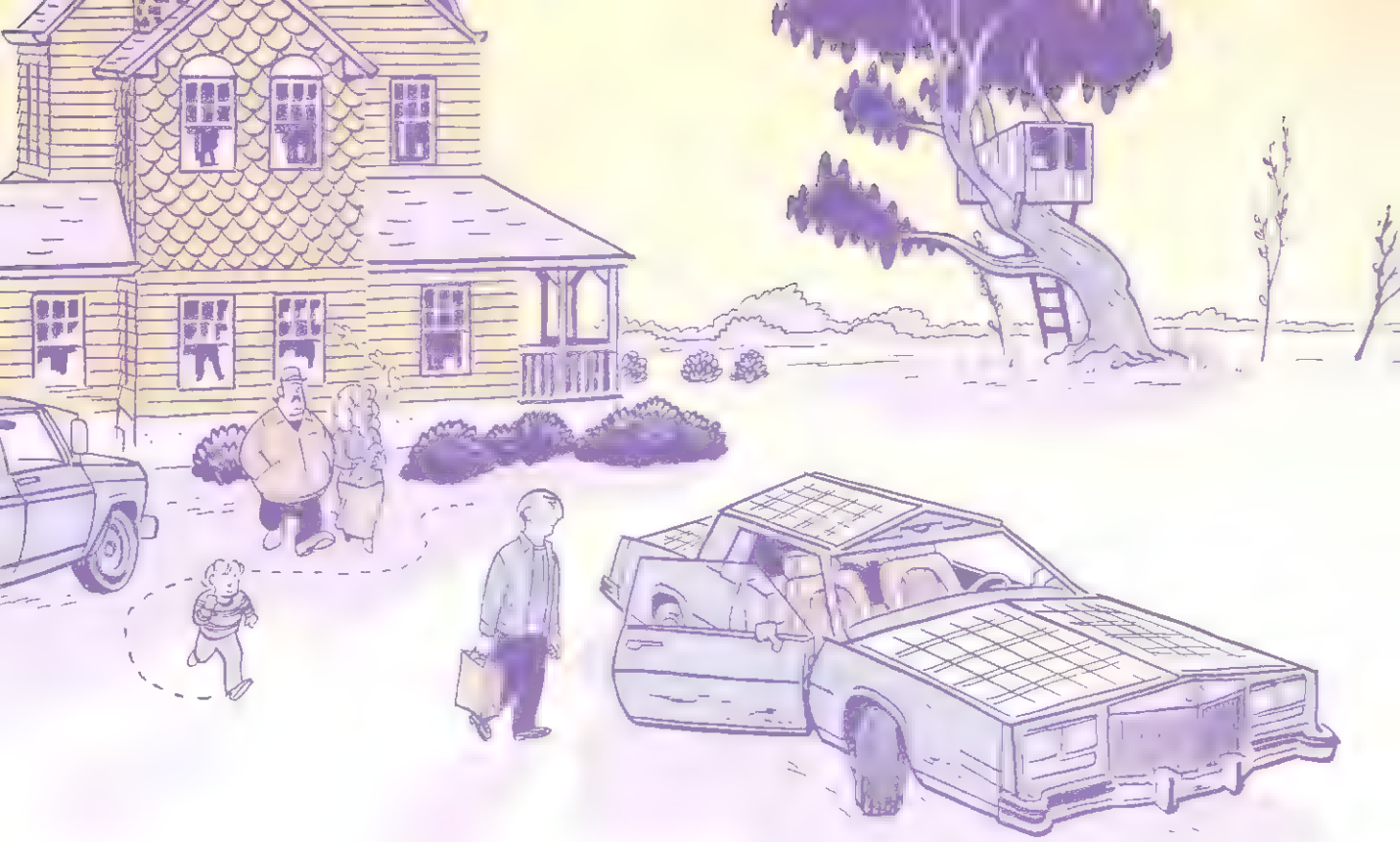


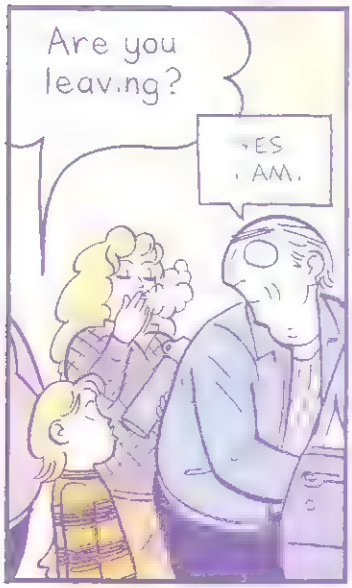


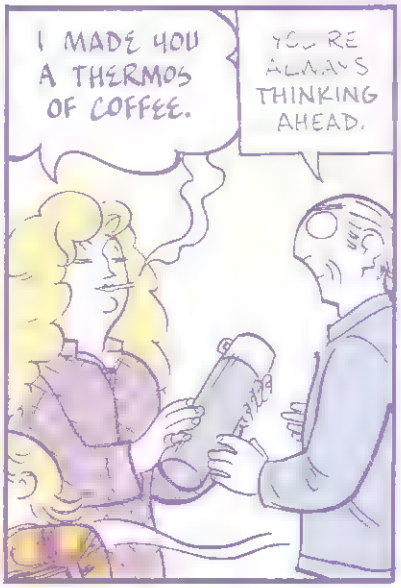



DR-RUM

WAIT!
HEY –
WAIT!
DON'T MOVE!
?
What are you –
HOLD ON!
THE ERE WE GO
ALL RIGHT KITTY?
Sonnava...
MREEE
HEY – WHOA!
There's gratitude for you.

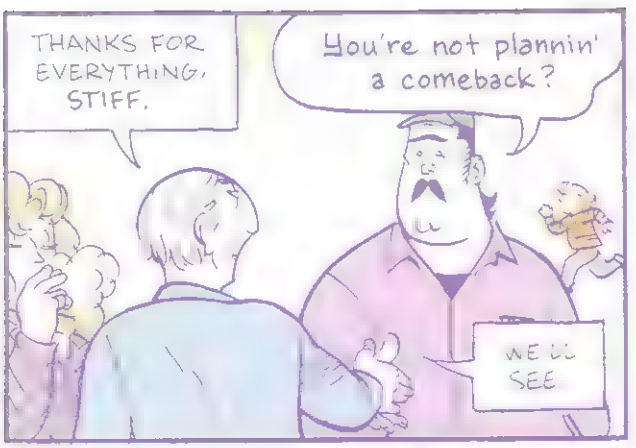


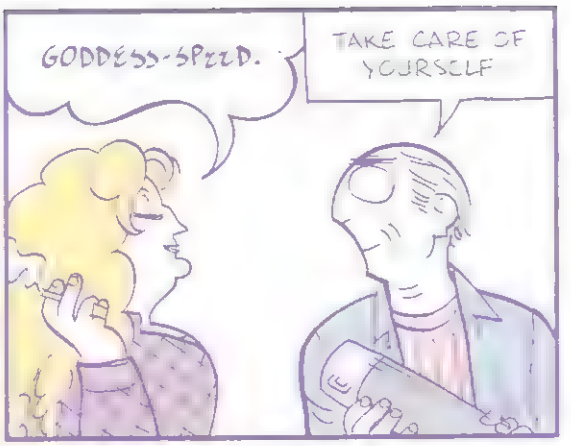

Are you leaving?
YES I AM.

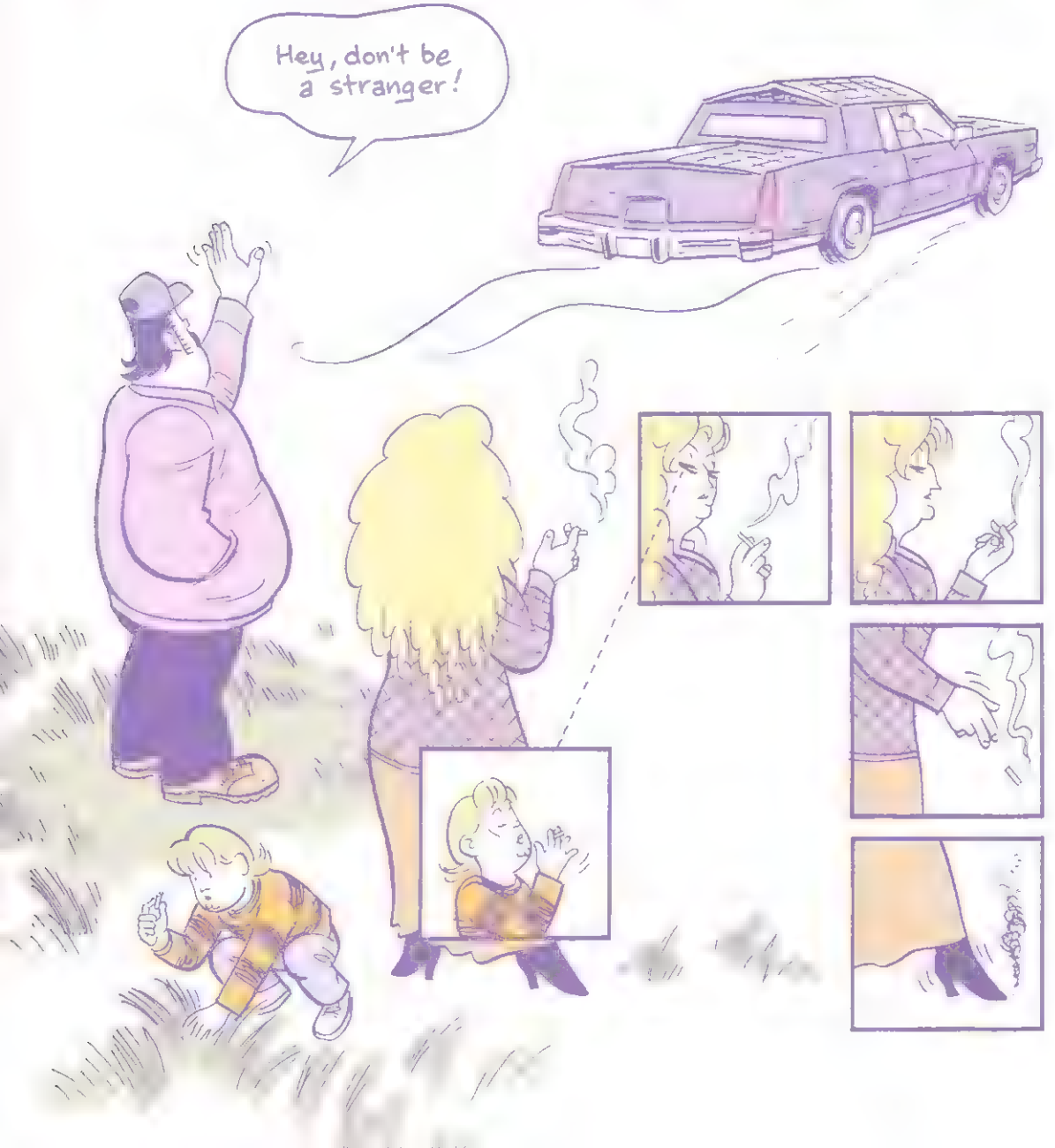

I MADE YOU A THERMOS OF COFFEE.
YOU'RE ALWAYS THINKING AHEAD.

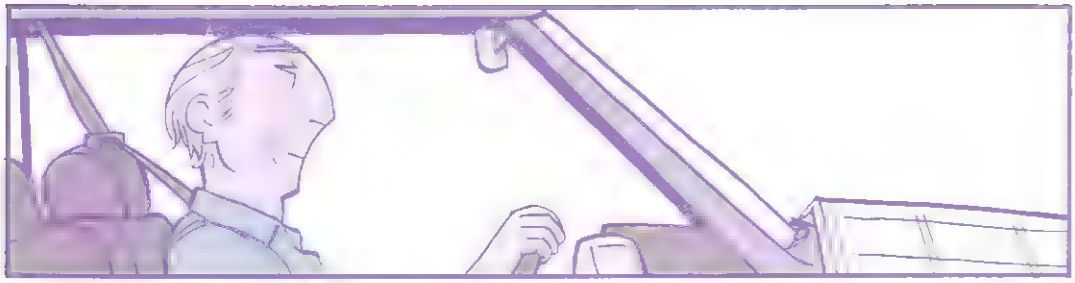
How's she runnin'?
SHE WON'T SET ANY SPEED RECORDS...
...BUT SHE'LL GET ME WHERE I WANT TO GO.

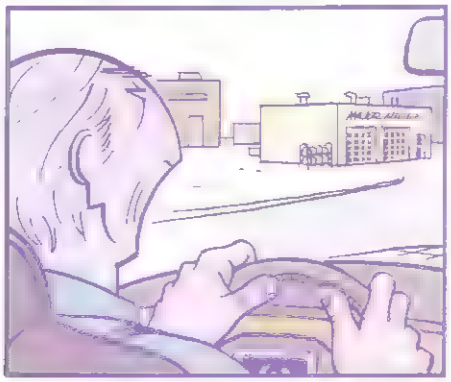
SO LONG, RUNNING DOG.
Bye

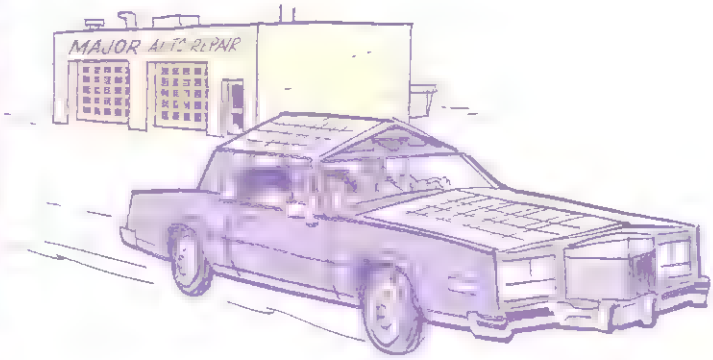

THANKS FOR EVERYTHING, STIFF.
You're not plannin' a comeback?
WE'LL SEE

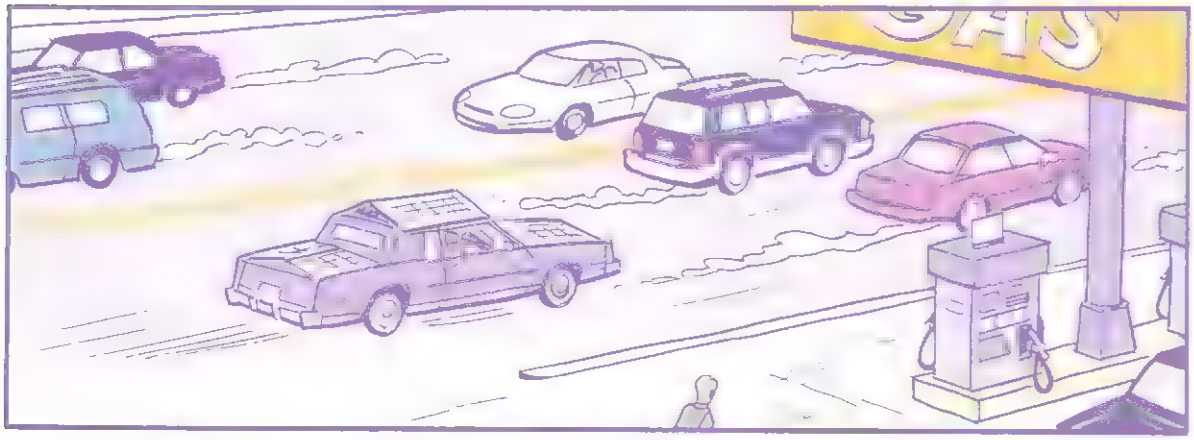

GODDESS-SPEED.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

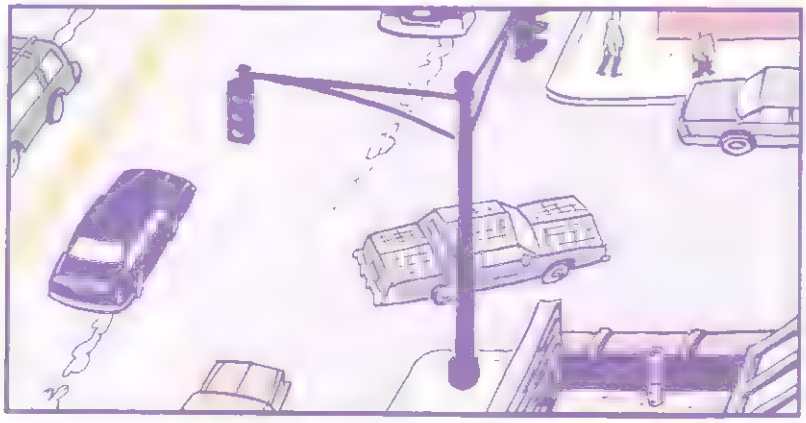

Hey, don't be a stranger!

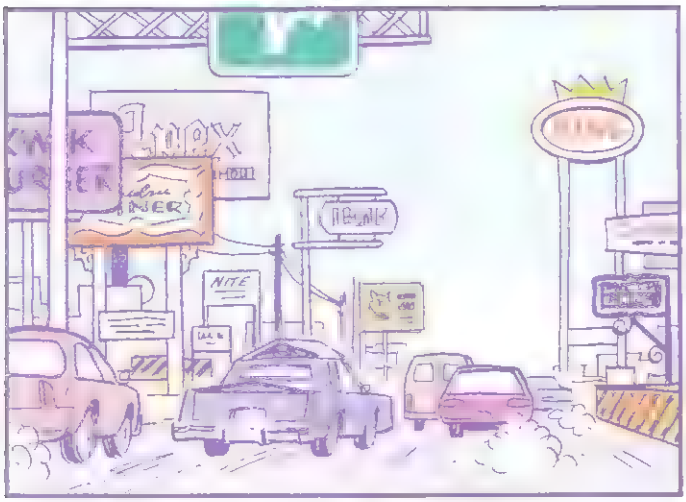


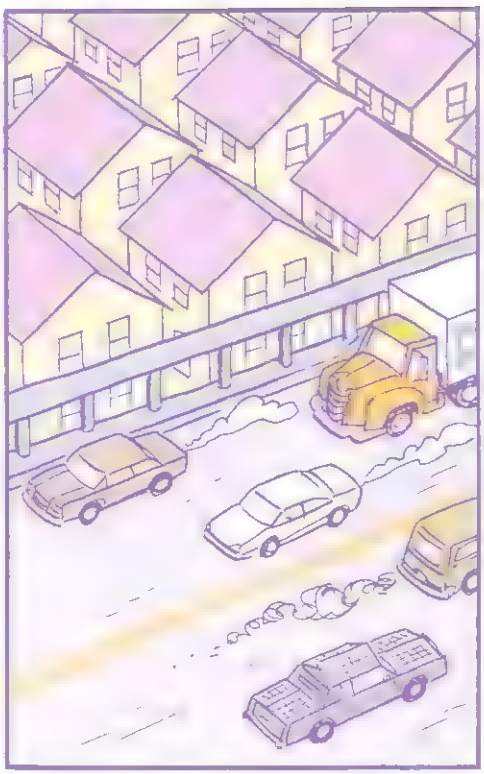


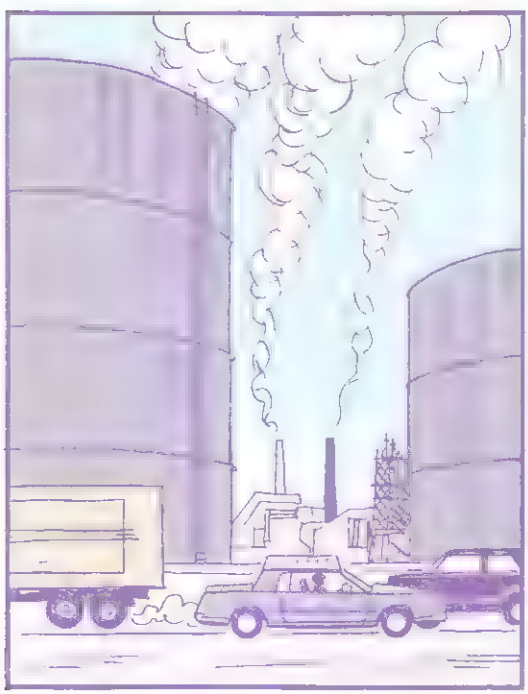

MAJOR AUTO REPAIR

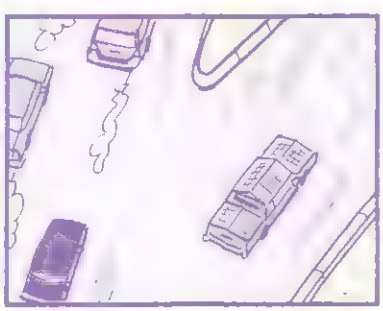


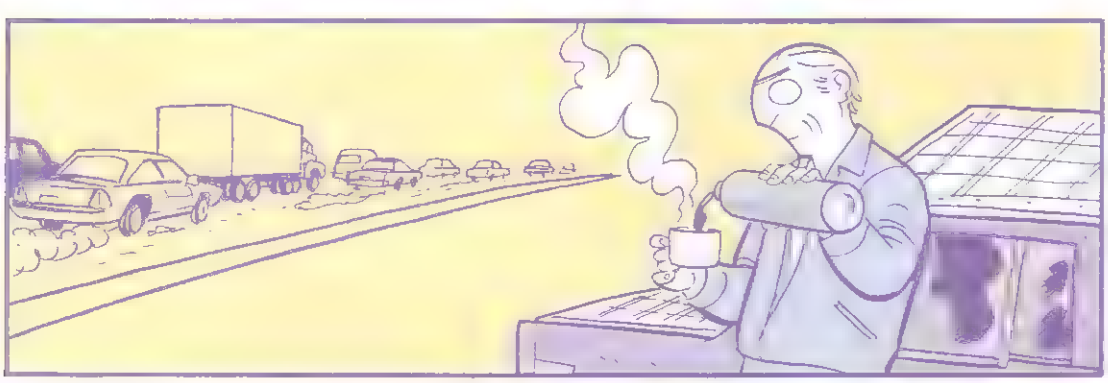


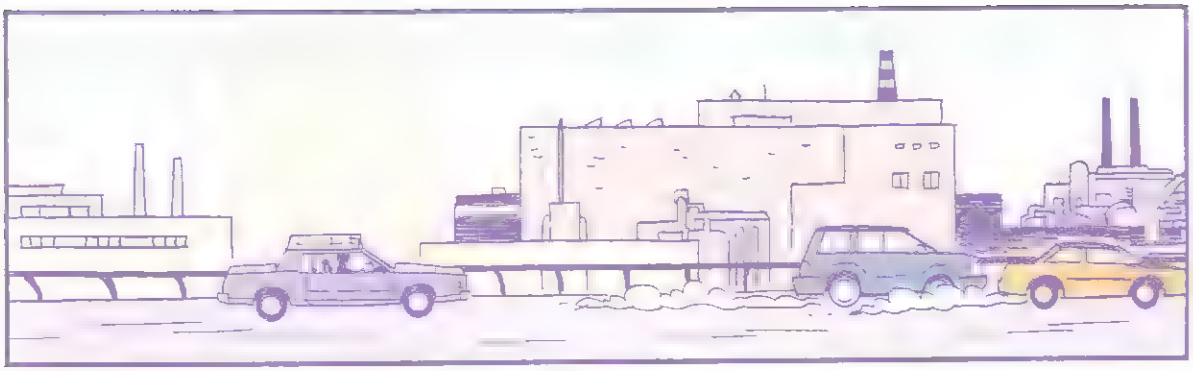

NITE

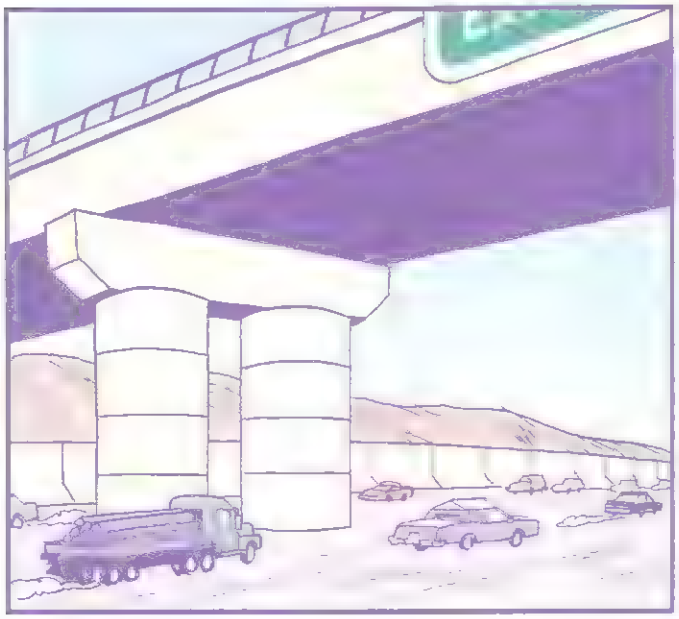


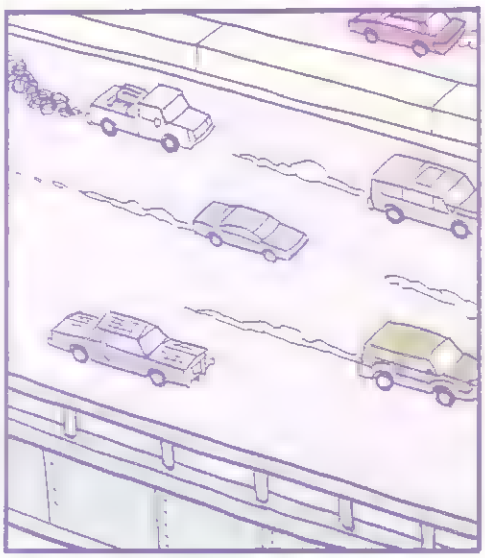


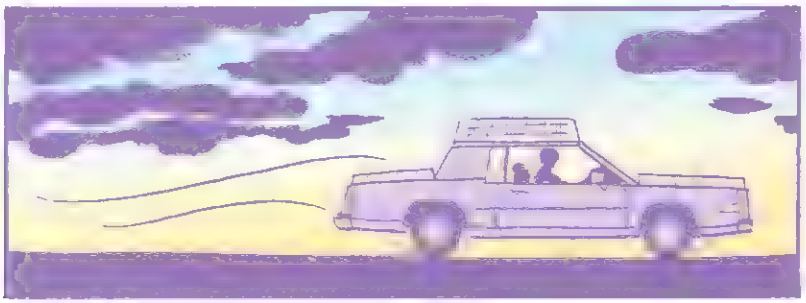


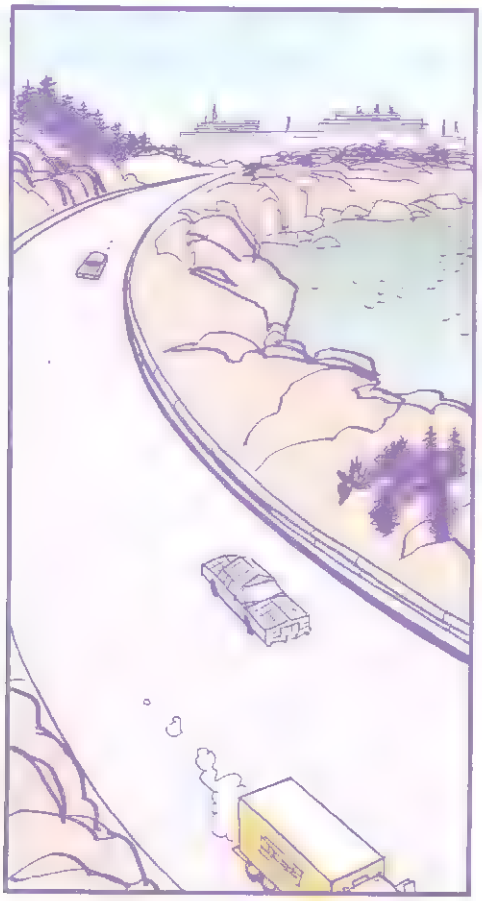


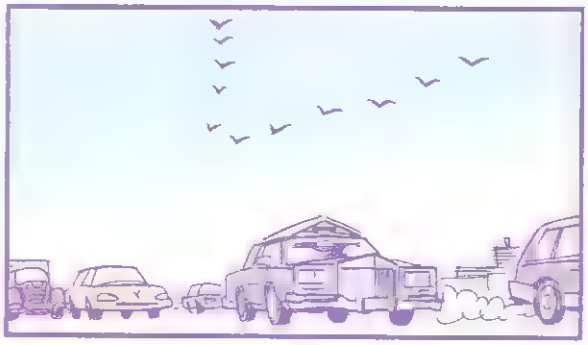


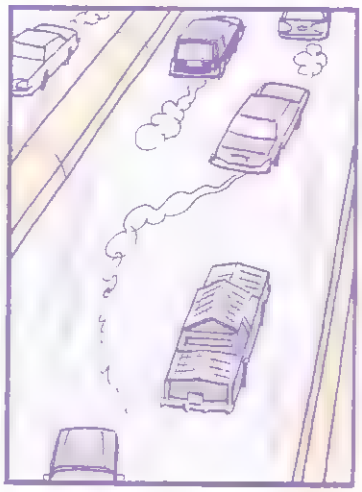


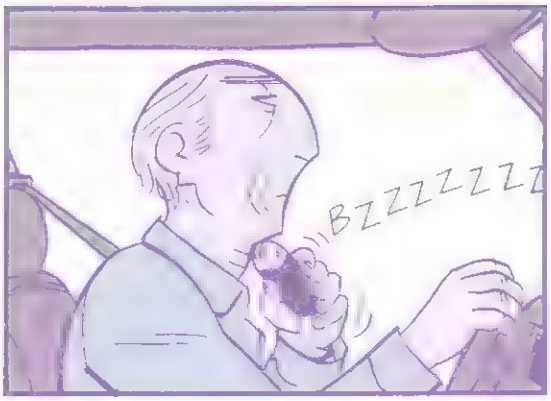








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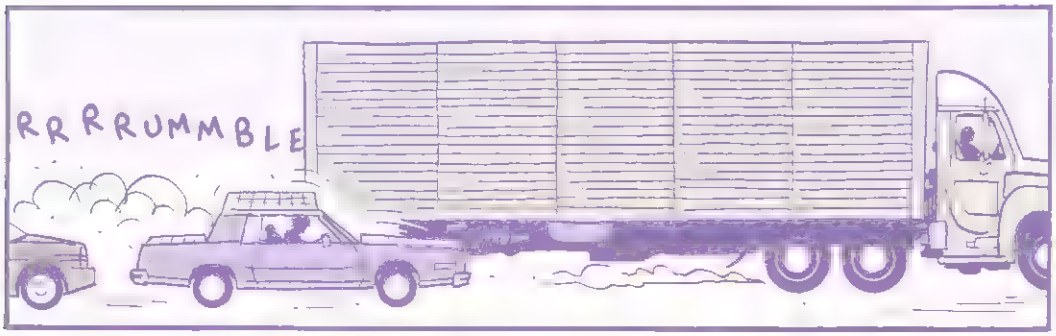
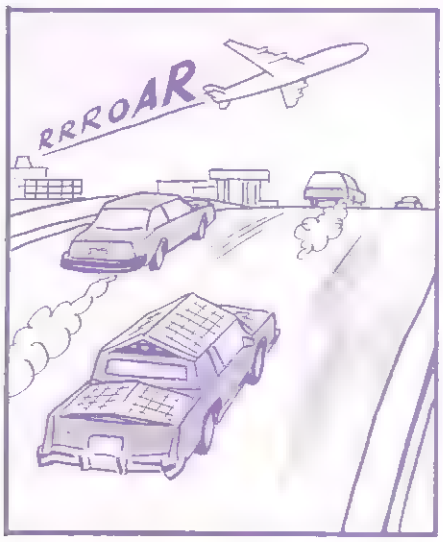
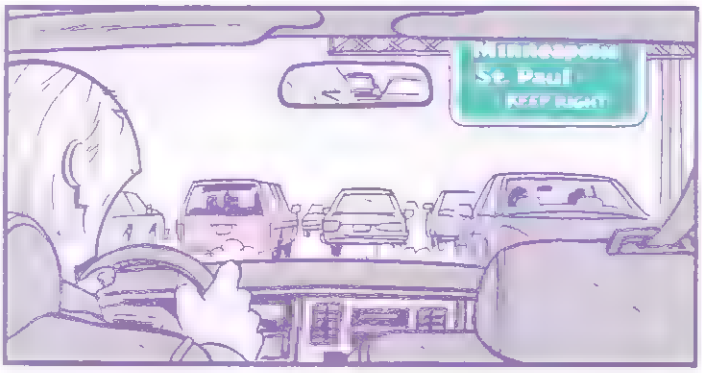
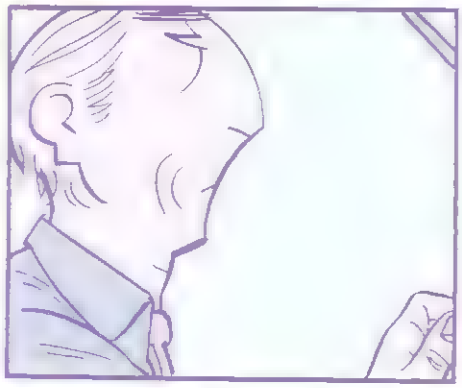
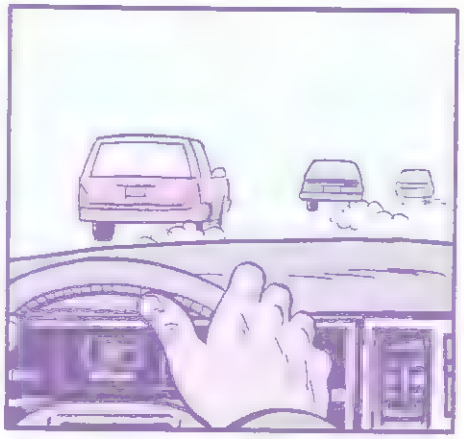
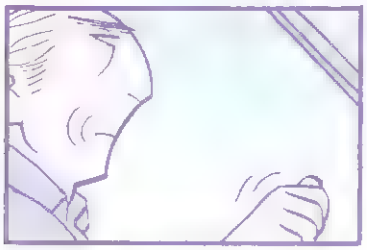

RRRRUMMBLE

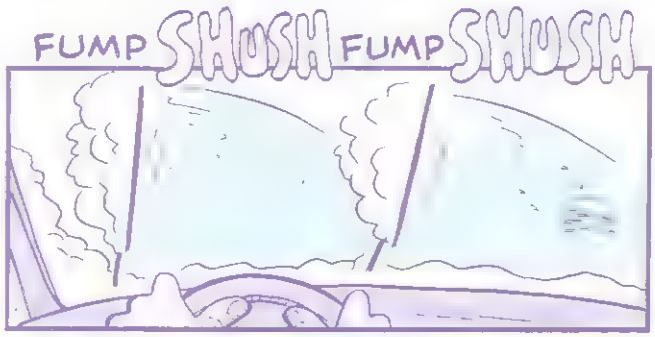

RRROAR

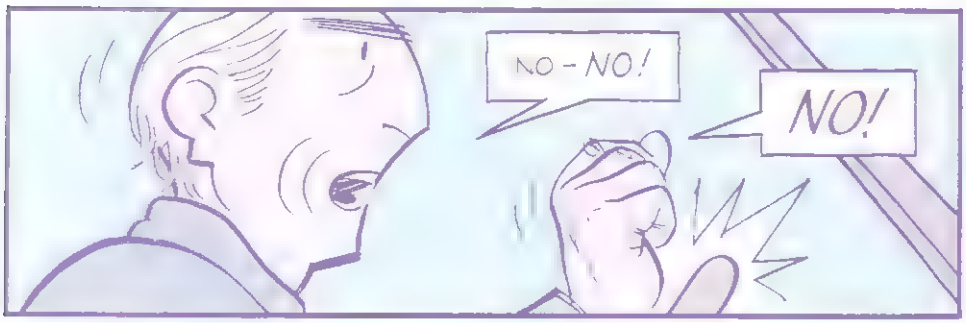

Minneapolis
St. Paul
KEEP RIGHT

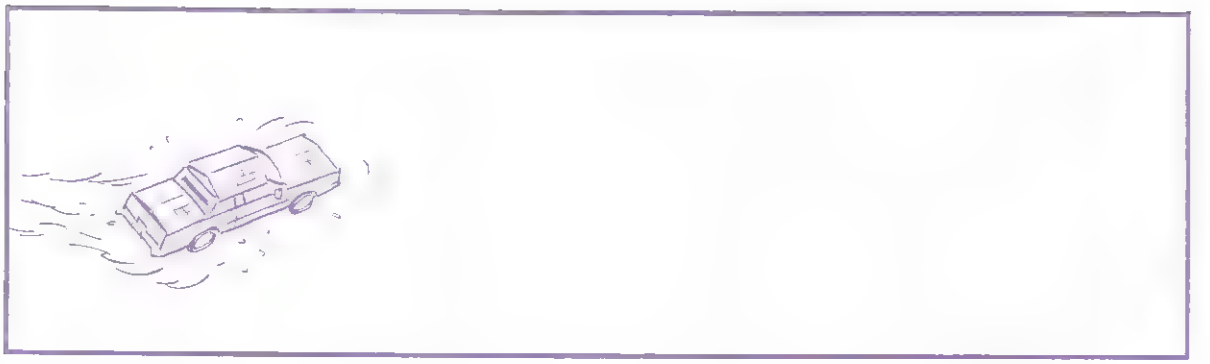


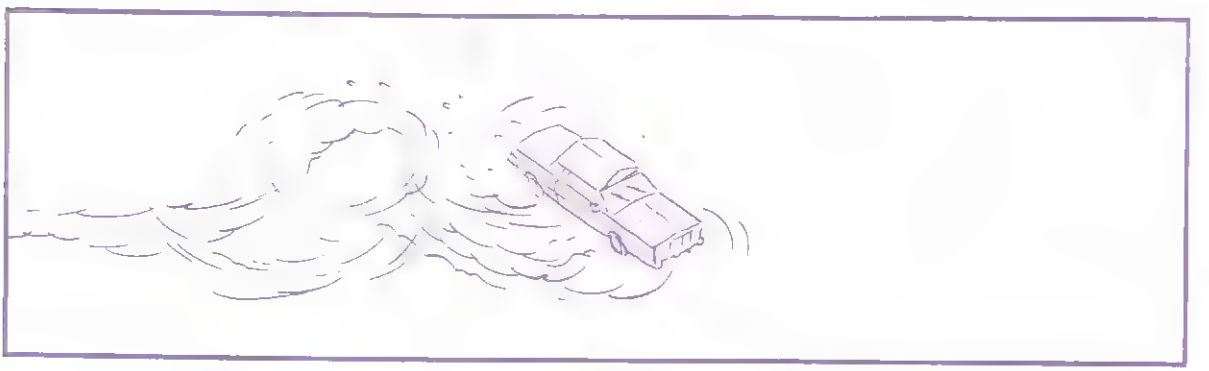


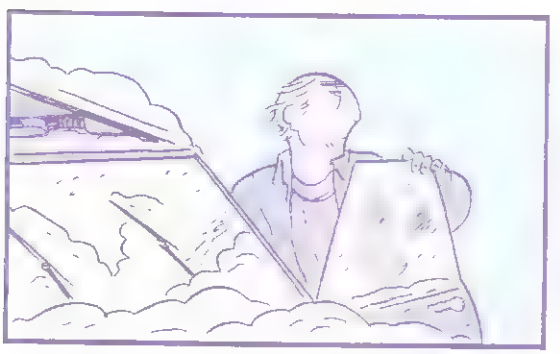


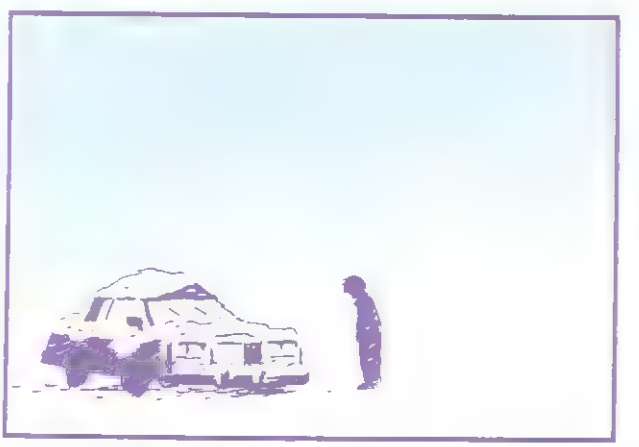

FUMP SHUSH FUMP SHUSH

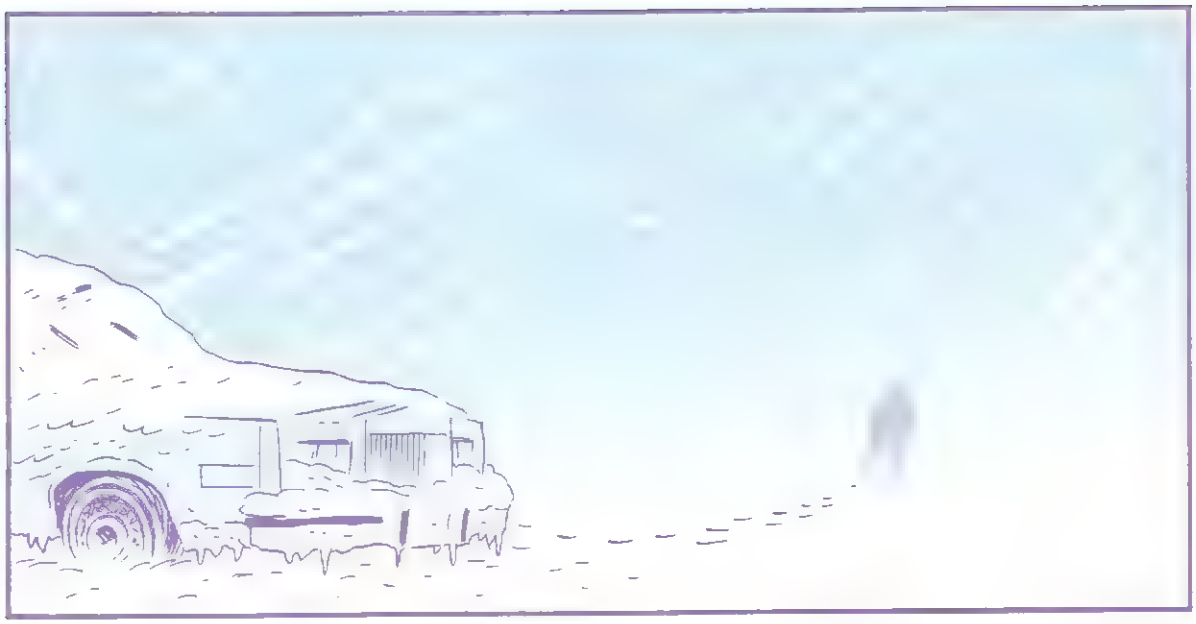

NO - NO!
NO!

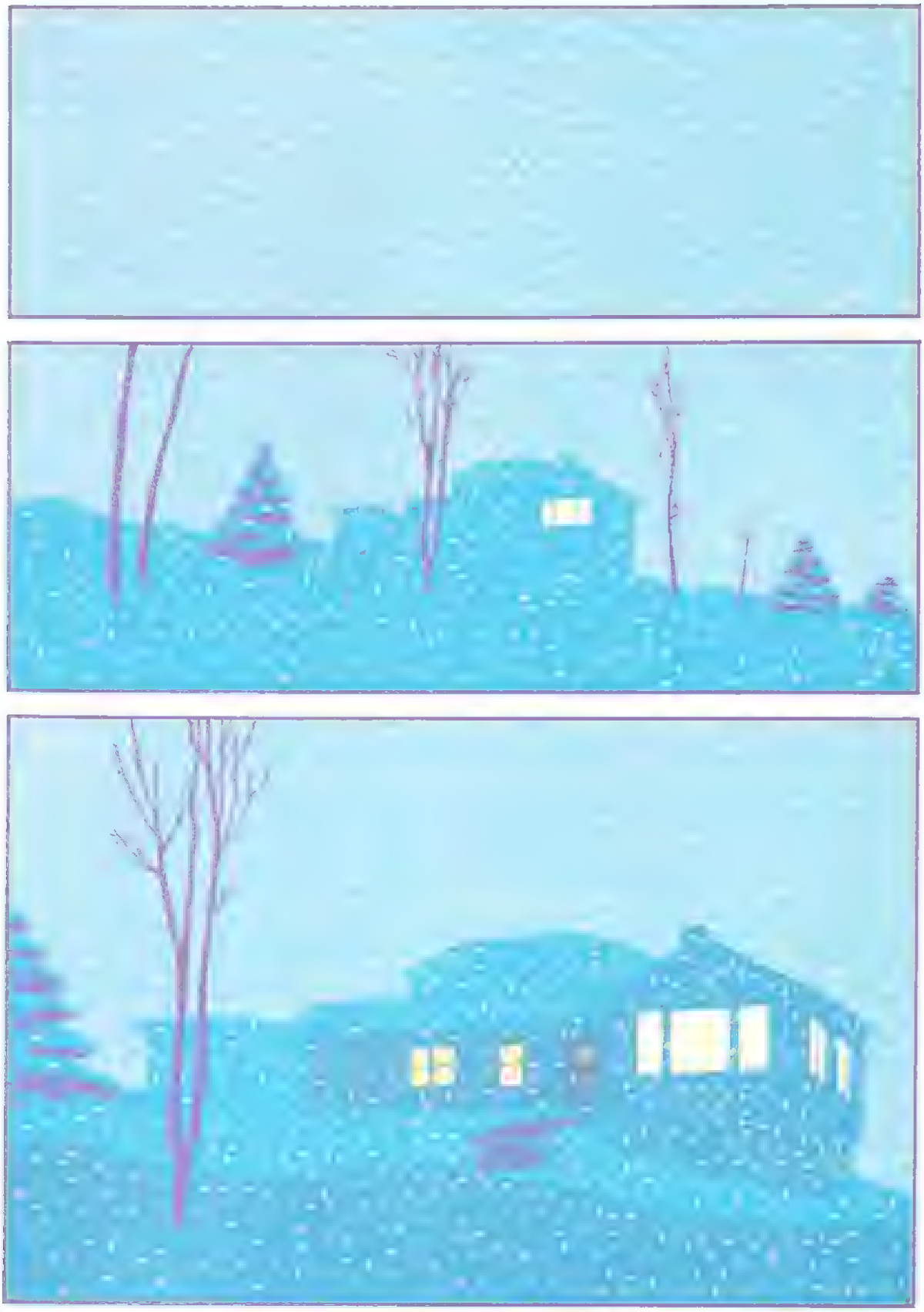




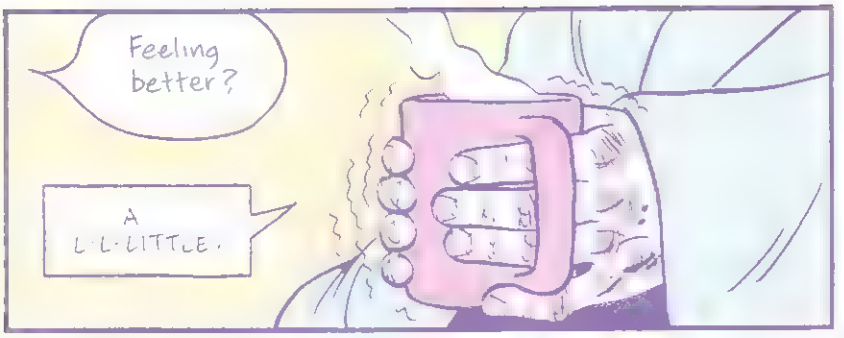


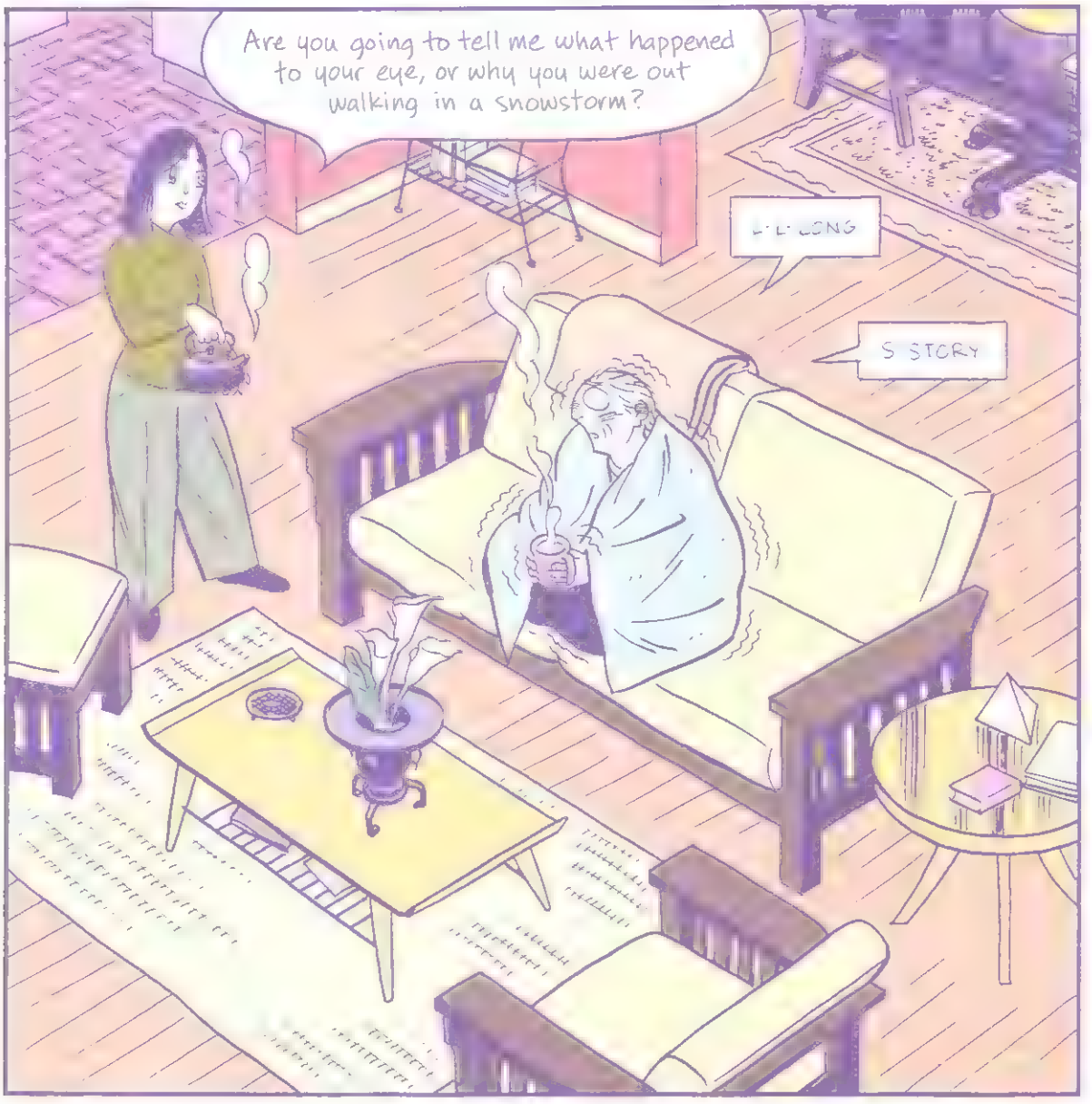




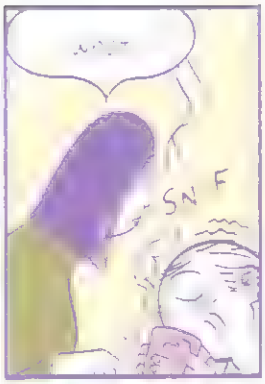


DING DONG
H-H-H-HELLO, D-D-DAISY.


Feeling better?
A L·L·LITTLE.

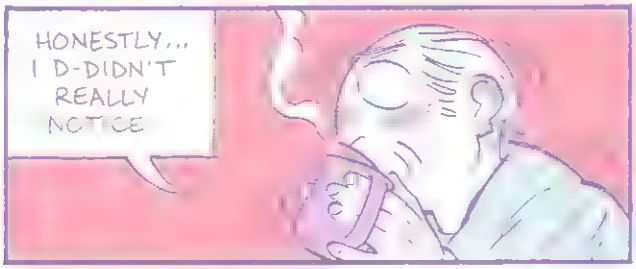

Are you going to tell me what happened to your eye, or why you were out walking in a snowstorm?
L·L·LONG
S STORY

Hmm


SNIF

No' When?
I... RAN OUT OF C-CIGARETTES ONE D-DAY...

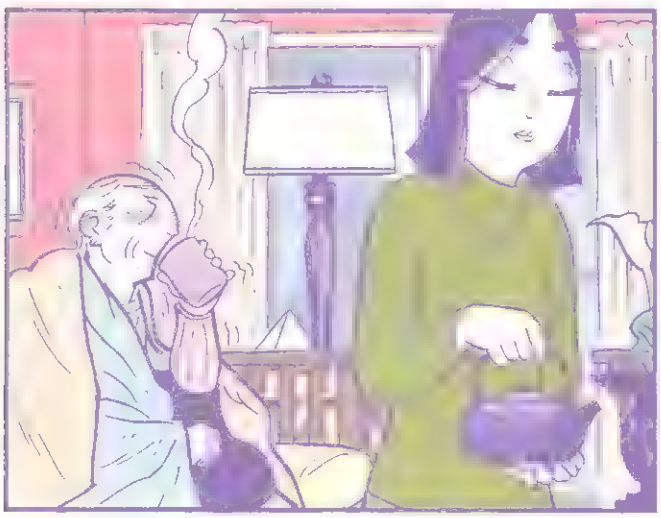
...AND N-NEVER GOT AROUND TO B-BUYING ANOTHER P-PACK.


HONESTLY... I D-DIDN'T REALLY NOTICE

Here have another blanket
HANA
H-HOW COME.
YOU'RE STILL SINGLE?

Because.

I never met another erk like you

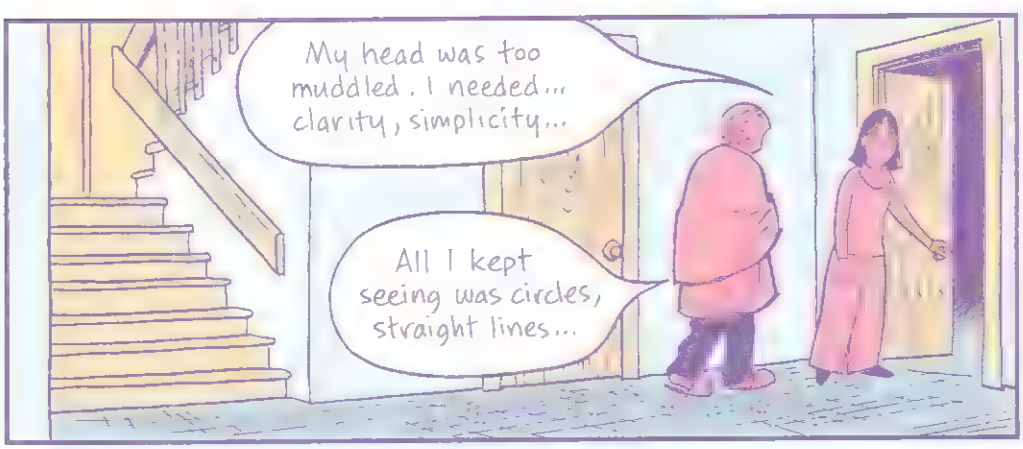


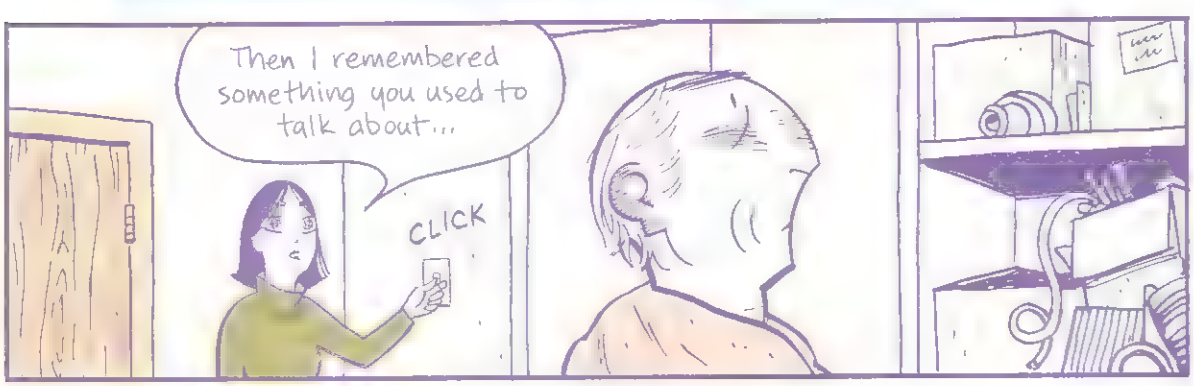
IS THIS
...YOURS?

That's just a sketch
I can show you if you feel like walking.
M OKAY

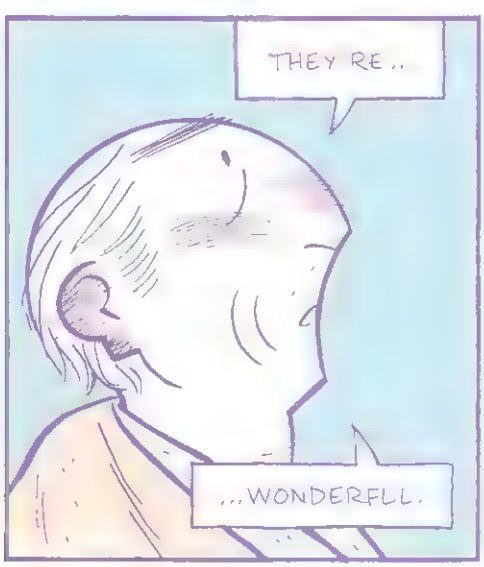
After I first moved back here, I tried to keep working making the same kind of pieces I was making in Ithaca...

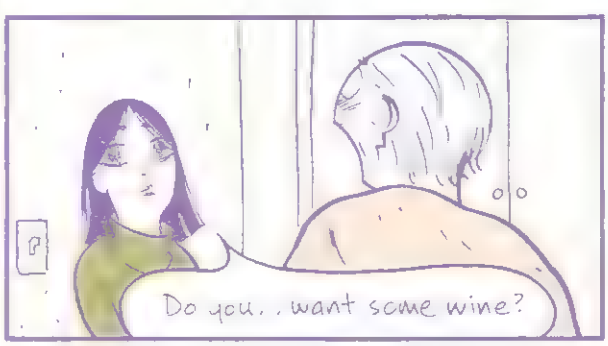
...but it was a mess. I kept taking them apart and starting over, getting nowhere.


My head was too muddled. I needed... clarity, simplicity...
All I kept seeing was circles, straight lines...

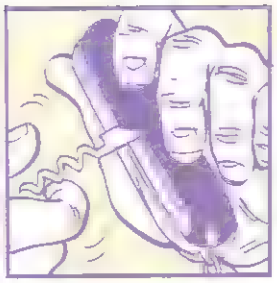

Then I remembered something you used to talk about...
CLICK

..THE F VE PLATONIC SOLIDS.





This bottle's been sitting around a while. Let me get a corkscrew.
I'VE GOT IT



MM-HMM

I can't believe you still have that.
WHY WOULD I GET RID OF A GOOD PIECE OF DESIGN LIKE THIS?

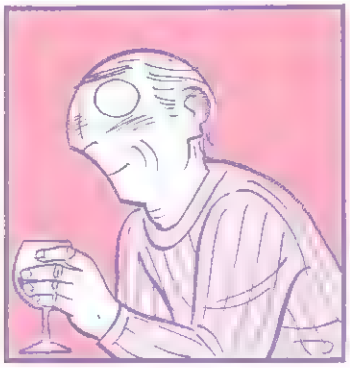
He died.
A few months ago.

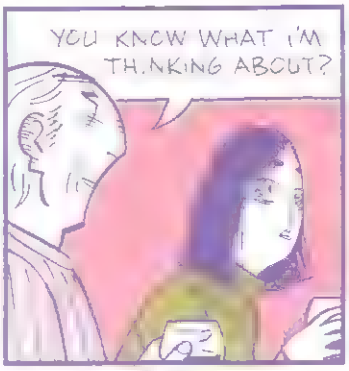
I'M SO SORRY
sick, you remember? – from when he was

...I think he had a good life.
BECAUSE OF YOU.
You know, he didn't care what I looked like, or what I said, or did, or what kind of state I was in –
– and there were some nights I was in pretty bad shape.
...he always found me, and curled up next to me to sleep.
And even at the end, when his kidneys were failing, and his lungs...
...and I didn't have the heart – or the strength – to put him down...
he'd still come, like he was trying to comfort me...

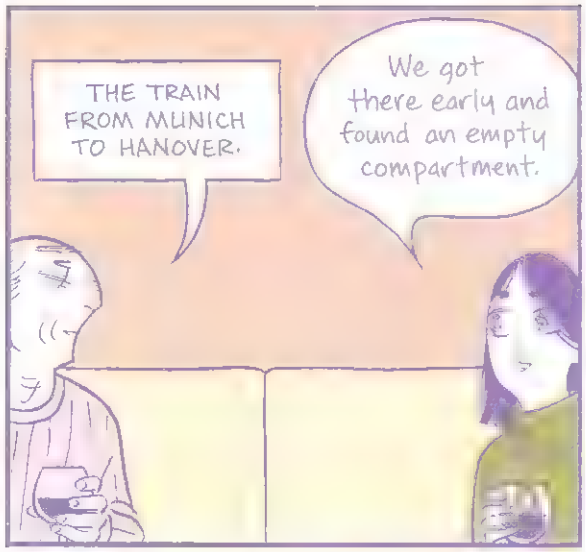
...it was like, no matter what he was going through, he tried to grab at happiness whenever he could, even if it was only five minutes out of every day...
...and the thing is, I think during those times he really **was** happy.

MAYBE.
THAT'S ALL WE CAN ASK FOR




YOU KNOW WHAT I'M THINKING ABOUT?

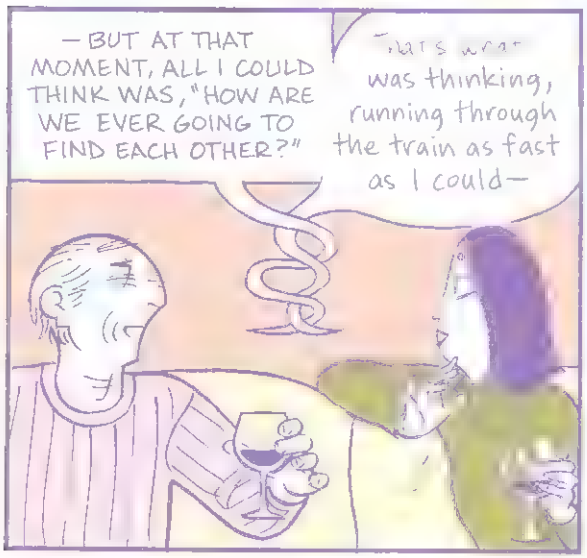
That trip we took to Europe...
...riding the trains from country to country


THE TRAIN FROM MUNICH TO HANOVER.
We got there early and found an empty compartment.

THE TRAIN WASN'T LEAVING FOR HALF AN HOUR, SO YOU DECIDED TO USE THE BATHROOM IN THE STATION.
And while I was walking alongside the train, it started to pull out.

AND I HAD ALL YOUR THINGS WITH ME – YOUR PASSPORT, YOUR MONEY, YOUR CLOTHES...
back on the moving

WONDERED IF THERE HAD BEEN A MISTAKE, AND MAYBE I HAD GOTTEN OFF –
– We found out later it was just changing tracks –


– BUT AT THAT MOMENT, ALL I COULD THINK WAS, "HOW ARE WE EVER GOING TO FIND EACH OTHER?"
was thinking, running through the train as fast as I could –

I WAS NEVER SO HAPPY TO SEE ANYONE IN MY LIFE.
Me, too

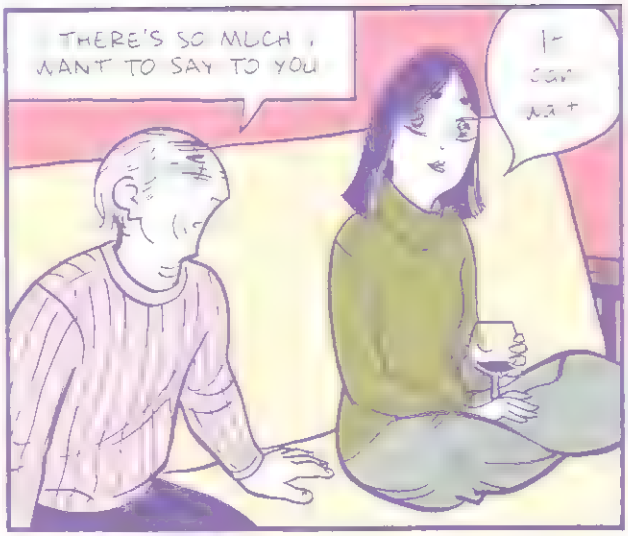
I hated you for a while.
I KNOW.

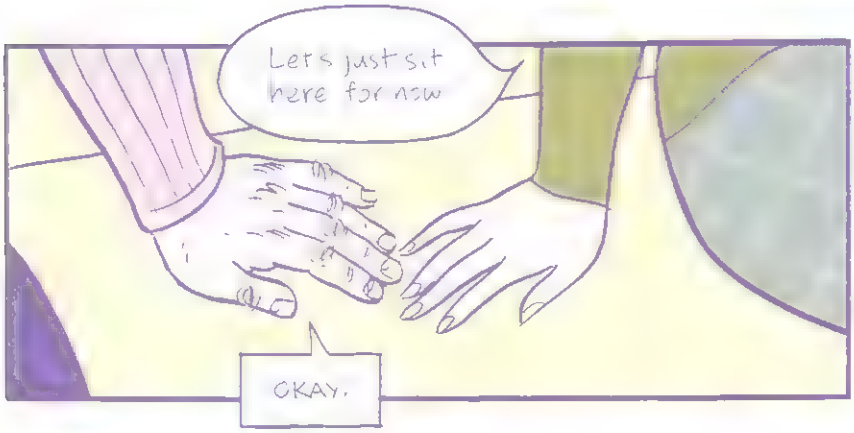
Why does life have to be so
STRESSful?

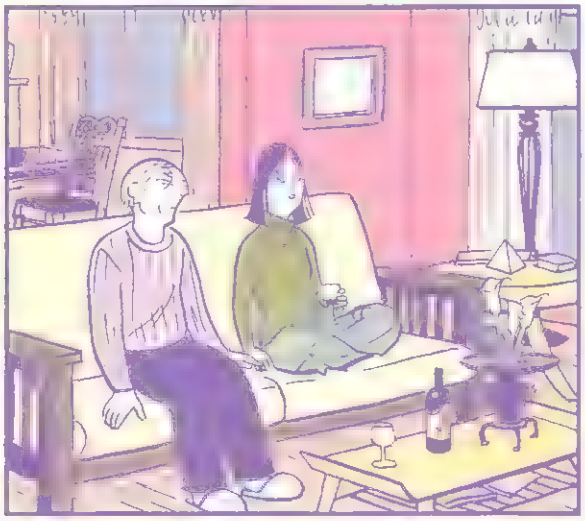
THAT'S WHY THEY SAY.

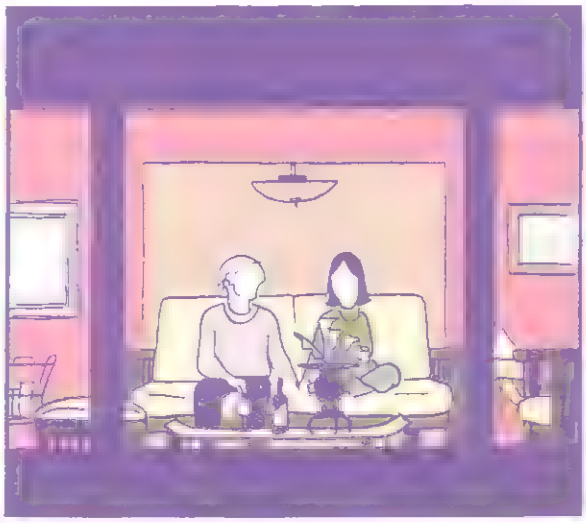
"rest in peace"

HANA


THERE'S SO MUCH I WANT TO SAY TO YOU
I CAN NOT

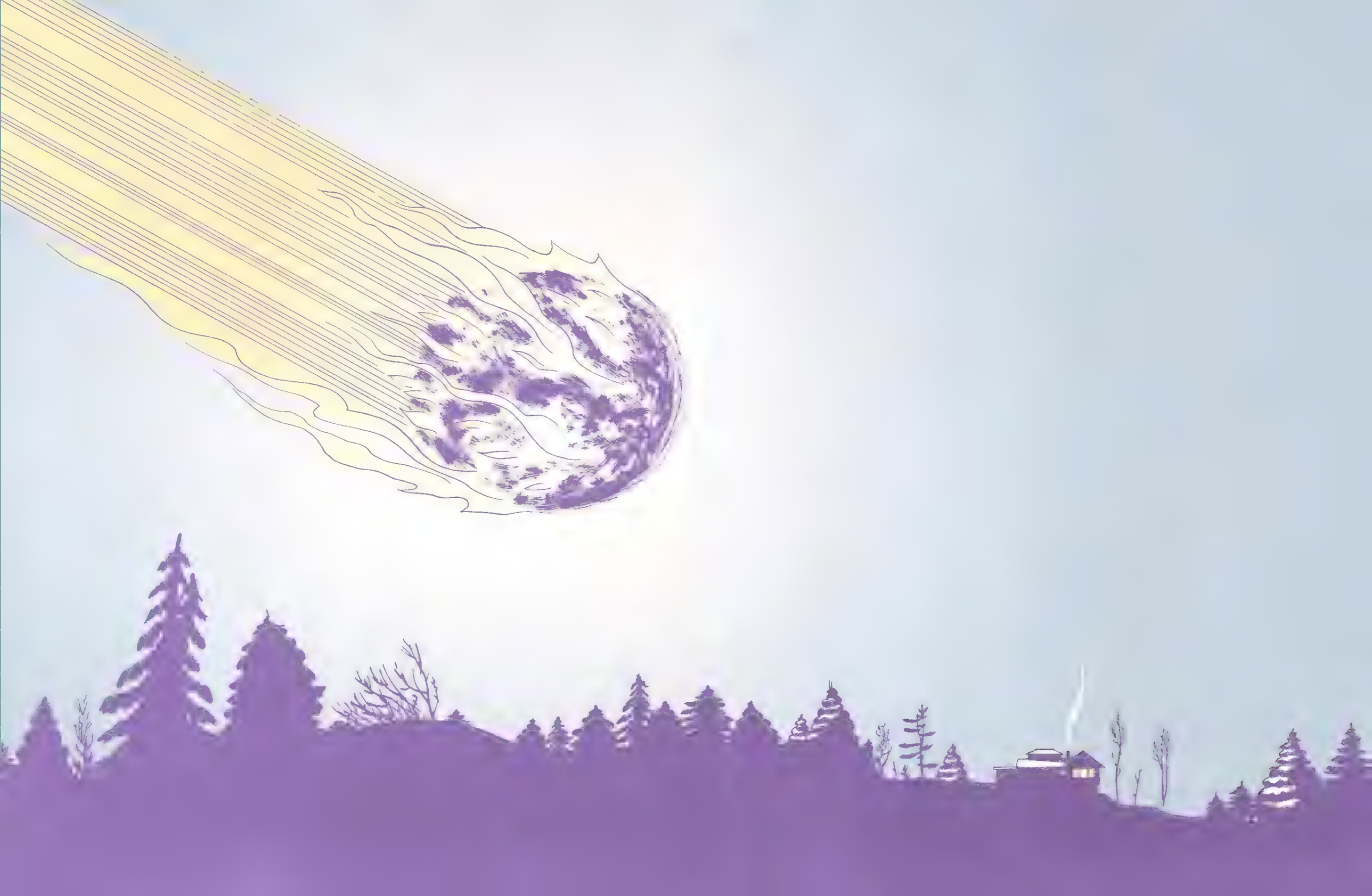

Let's just sit here for now
OKAY.



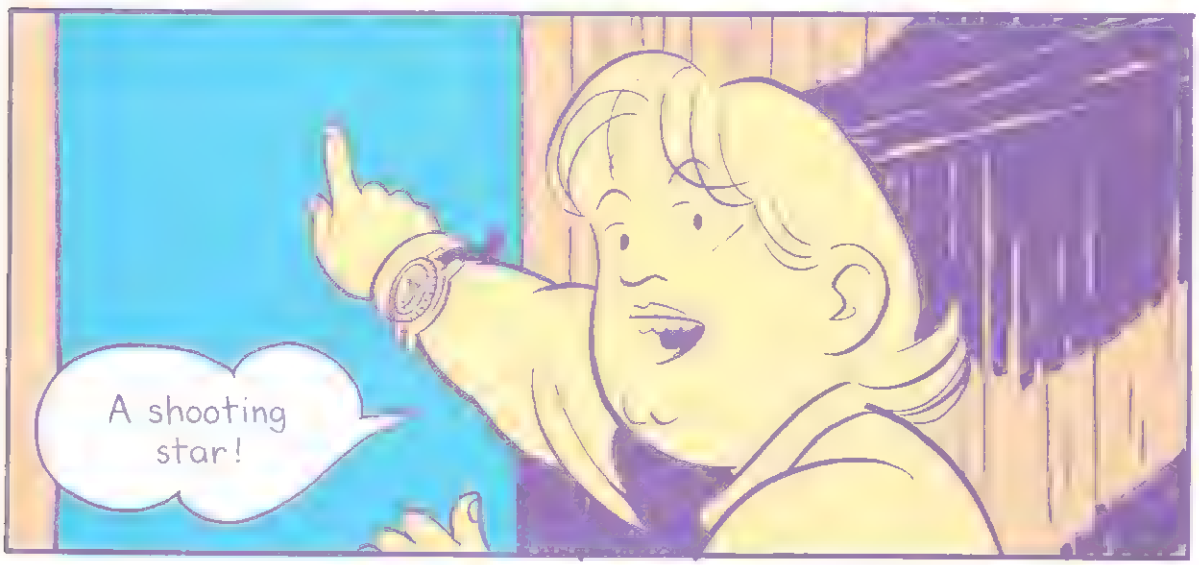


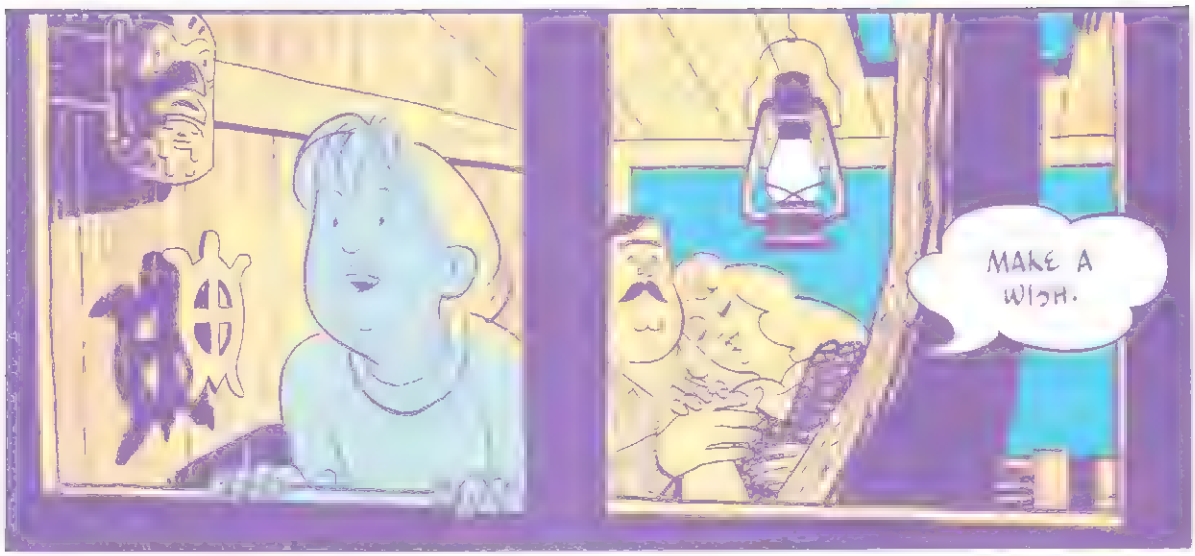
This
is
nice

WHAT'S THAT NOISE?



Mommy, look!


A shooting star!


MAKE A WISH.

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For his extraordinary efforts to realize this book as I imagined it, thank you to AH.

For almost three decades of inspirational words, a special thank you to DH.

And most of all, for her enduring ability to surprise, her protean imagination, her big, open heart, her gentle guidance, and her inexplicable patience, thank you to R, for whom this book was made.

DM

This book was printed on 100% recycled paper.

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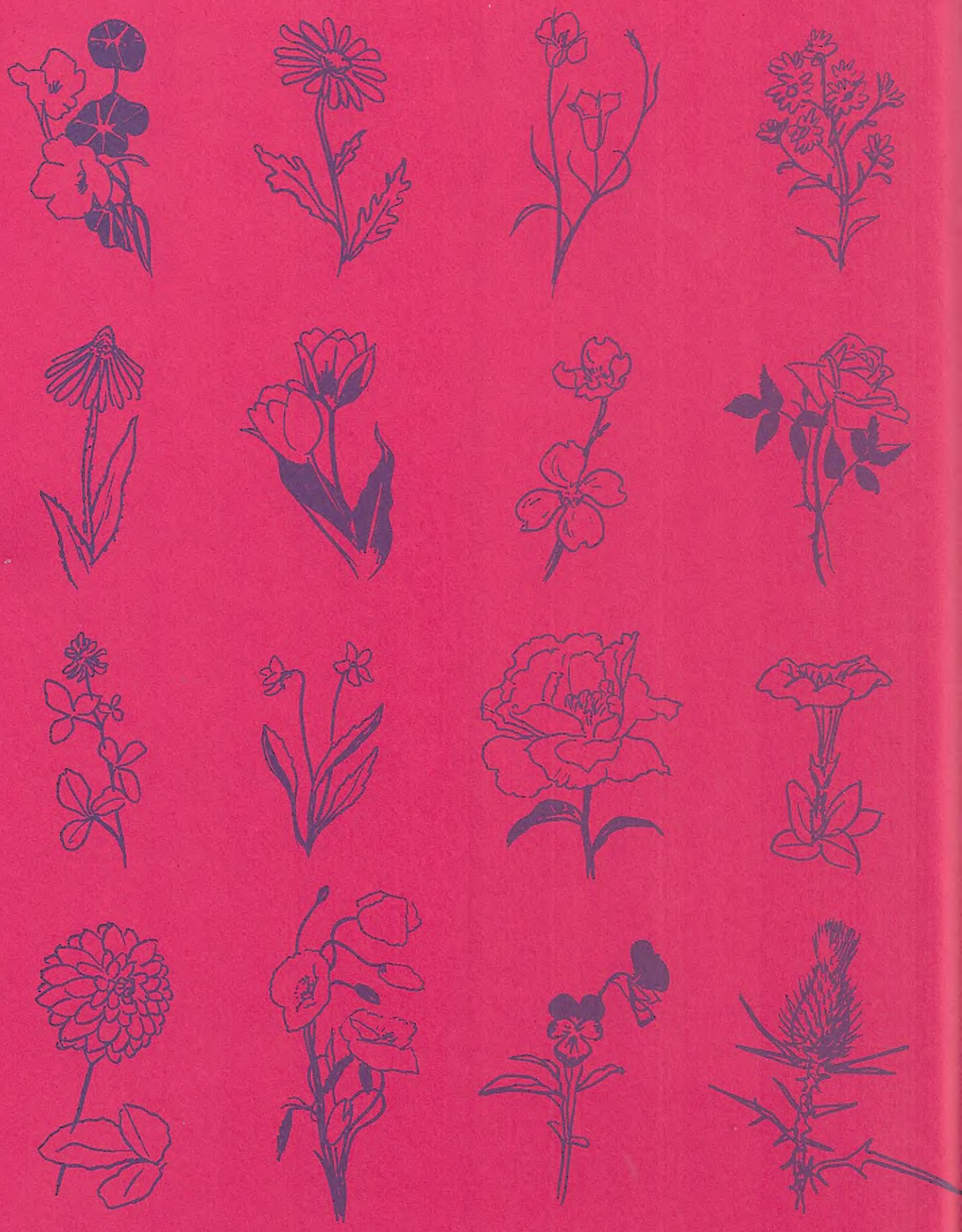

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